Schol. Gustrow. d.d. H. Hodrath.
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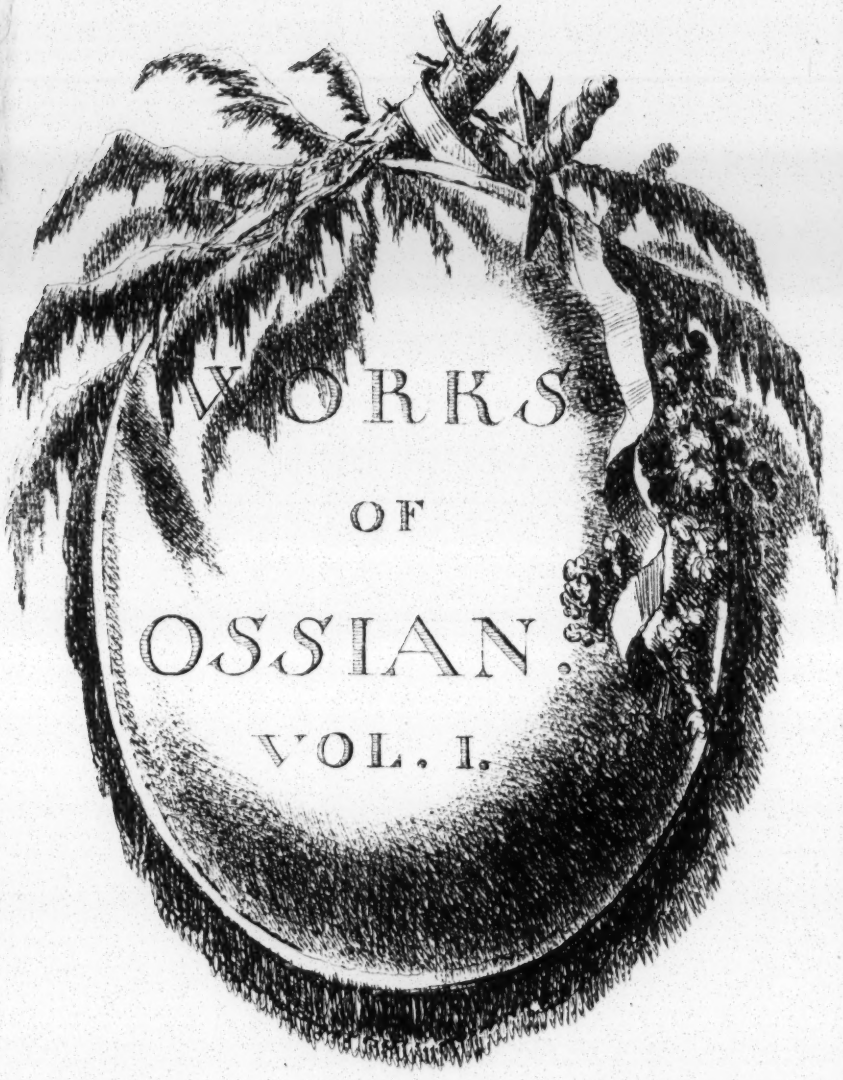
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A

DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE ANTIQUITY &c. OF THE POEMS OF OSSIAN the Son of FINGAL.

Inquiries into the antiquities of nations afford more pleaſure than any real advantage to mankind. The ingenious may form ſyſtems of hiſtory on probabilities and a few facts; but at a great diſtance of time, their accounts muſt be vague and uncertain. The infancy of ſtates and kingdoms is as deſtitute of great events, as of the means of tranſmitting them to poſterity. The arts of poliſhed life, by which alone facts can be preſerved with certainty, are the production of a well-formed

community. It is then hiſtorians begin to write, and public tranſactions to be worthy remembrance. The actions of former times are left in obſcurity, or magnified by uncertain traditions. Hence it is that we find ſo much of the marvellous in the origin of every nation; poſterity being always ready to believe any thing, however fabulous, that reflects honour on their anceſtors. The Greeks and Romans were remarkable for this weakneſs. They ſwallowed the moſt abſurd fables concerning the high antiquities of their reſpective nations. Good hiſtorians, however, roſe very early amongſt them, and tranſmitted, with luſtre, their great actions to poſterity. It is to them that they owe that unrivalled fame they now enjoy, while the great actions of other nations are involved in fables, or loſt in obſcurity. The Celtic nations afford a ſtriking inſtance of this kind. They, though once the maſters of Europe from the mouth of the river Oby (*), in Ruſſia, to Cape Finiſterre,

(*) *Plin. l. 6.*

ſterre, the weſtern point of Gallicia in Spain, are very little mentioned in hiſtory. They truſted their fame to tradition and the ſongs of their bards, which, by the viciſſitude of human affairs, are long ſince loſt. Their ancient language is the only monument that remains of them; and the traces of it being found in places ſo widely diſtant from each other, ſerves only to ſhew the extent of their ancient power, but throws very little light on their hiſtory.

Of all the Celtic nations, that which poſſeſſed old Gaul is the moſt renowned; not perhaps on account of worth ſuperior to the reſt, but for their wars with a people who had hiſtorians to tranſmit the fame of their enemies, as well as their own, to poſterity. Britain was firſt peopled by them, according to the teſtimony of the beſt authors (*); its ſituation in reſpect to Gaul makes the opinion probable; but what puts it beyond all diſpute, is that the ſame cuſtoms and language pre-

(*) *Cæſ. l. 5. Agric. l. 1. c. 2.*

vailed among the inhabitans of both in the days of Julius Cæsar (*).

The colony from Gaul poſſeſſed themſelves, at firſt, of that part of Britain which was next to their own country; and ſpreading northward, by degrees, as they increaſed in numbers, peopled the whole iſland. Some adventurers paſſing over from thoſe parts of Britain that are within ſight of Ireland, were the founders of the Iriſh nation: which is a more probable ſtory than the idle fables of Mileſian and Gallician colonies. Diodorus Siculus (†) mentions it as a thing well known in his time, that the inhabitants of Ireland were originally Britons; and his teſtimony is unqueſtionable, when we conſider that, for many ages, the language and cuſtoms of both nations were the ſame.

Tacitus was of opinion that the ancient Caledonians were of German extract. By the language and cuſtoms which

(*) *Cæſar. Pomp. Mel. Tacitus.*

(†) *Diod. Sic. l. 5.*

which always prevailed in the North of Scotland, and which are undoubtedly Celtic, one would be tempted to differ in opinion from that celebrated writer. The Germans, properly ſo called, were not the ſame with the ancient Celtæ. The manners and cuſtoms of the two nations were ſimilar; but their language different. The Germans (*) are the genuine deſcendants of the ancient Daæ, afterwards well known by the name of Daci, and paſſed originally into Europe by the way of the northern countries, and ſettled beyond the Danube, towards the vaſt regions of Tranſilvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia; and from thence advanced by degrees into Germany. The Celtæ (†), it is certain, ſent many colonies into that country, all of whom retained their own laws, language, and cuſtoms; and it is of them, if any colonies came from Germany into Scotland, that the ancient Caledonians were deſcended.

(*) *Strabo, l. 7.*

(†) *Cæſ. l. 6. Liv. l. 5. Tac. de mor. Germ.*

But whether the Caledonians were a colony of the Celtic Germans, or the ſame with the Gauls that firſt poſſeſſed themſelves of Britain, is a matter of no moment at this diſtance of time. Whatever their origin was, we find them very numerous in the time of Julius Agricola, which is a preſumption that they were long before ſettled in the country. The form of their government was a mixture of ariſtocracy and monarchy, as it was in all the countries where the Druids bore the chief ſway. This order of men ſeems to have been formed on the ſame ſyſtem with the Dactyli Idæi and Curetes of the ancients. Their pretended intercourſe with heaven, their magic and divination were the ſame. The knowledge of the Druids in natural cauſes, and the properties of certain things, the fruit of the experiments of ages, gained them a mighty reputation among the people. The eſteem of the populace ſoon increaſed into a veneration for the order; which a cunning and ambitious tribe of men took care to improve, to ſuch a degree

gree, that they, in a manner, ingroſſed the manage-ment of civil, as well as religous, matters. It is gene-rally allowed that they did not abuſe this extraordinary power; the preſerving their character of ſanctity was ſo eſſential to their influence, that they never broke out into violence or oppreſſion. The chiefs were allowed to execute the laws, but the legiſlative power was entirely in the hands of the Druids (*). It was by their authority that the tribes were united, in times of the greateſt dan-ger, under one head. This temporary king, or Vergobre-tus (†), was choſen by them, and generally laid down his office at the end of the war. Theſe prieſts enjoyed long this extraordinary privilege among the Celtic nations who lay beyond the pale of the Roman empire. It was in the beginning of the ſecond century that their power among the Caledonians begun to decline. The poems that celebra-te Trathal and Cormac, anceſtors to Fingal, are full of

(*) *Cæſ. l. 6.*

(†) *Fergubreth, the man to judge.*

particulars concerning the fall of the Druids, which account for the total ſilence concerning their religion in the poems that are now given to the public.

The continual wars of the Caledonians againſt the Romans hindered the nobility from initiating themſelves, as the cuſtom formerly was, into the order of the Druids. The precepts of their religion were confined to a few, and were not much attended to by a people inured to war. The Vergobretus, or chief magiſtrate, was choſen without the concurrence of the hierarchy, or continued in his office againſt their will. Continual power ſtrengthened his intereſt among the tribes, and enabled him to ſend down, as hereditary to his poſterity, the office he had only received himſelf by election.

On occaſion of a new war againſt the *King of the World*, as the poems emphatically call the Roman emperor, the Druids, to vindicate the honour of the order, began to reſume their ancient privilege of chuſing the Vergobretus. Carmal, the ſon of Tarno, being deputed

puted by them, came to the grandfather of the celebrated Fingal, who was then Vergobretus, and commanded him, in the name of the whole order, to lay down his office. Upon his refufal, a civil war commenced, which foon ended in almoft the total extinction of the religious order of the Druids. A few that remained, retired to the dark receffes of their groves, and the caves they had formerly ufed for their meditations. It is then we find them in *the circle of ftones*, and unheeded by the world. A total difregard for the order, and utter abhorrence of the Druidical rites enfued. Under this cloud of public hate, all that had any knowledge of the religion of the Druids became extinct, and the nation fell into the laft degree of ignorance of their rites and ceremonies.

It is no matter of wonder then, that Fingal and his fon Offian make fo little, if any, mention of the Druids, who where the declared enemies to their fucceffion in the fupreme magiftracy. It is a fingular cafe, it muft be

be allowed, that there are no traces of religion in the poems adſcribed to Oſſian; as the poetical compoſitions of other nations are ſo cloſely connected with their mythology. It is hard to account for it to thoſe who are not made acquainted with the manner of the old Scottiſh bards. That race of men carried their notions of martial honour to an extravagant pitch. Any aid given their heroes in battle, was thought to derogate from their fame; and the bards immediately tranſferred the glory of the action to him who had given that aid.

Had Oſſian brought down gods, as often as Homer hath done, to aſſiſt his heroes, this poem had not conſiſted of eulogiums on his friends, but of hymns to thoſe ſuperior beings. To this day, thoſe that write in the Galic language ſeldom mention religion in their profane poetry; and when they profeſſedly write of religion, they never interlard with their compoſitions, the actions of their heroes. This cuſtom alone, even though the religion of the Druids had not been previouſly extinguiſhed,

guiſhed, may, in ſome meaſure, account for Oſſian's ſilence concerning the religion of his own times.

To ſay, that a nation is void of all religion, is the ſame thing as to ſay, that it does not conſiſt of people endued with reaſon. The traditions of their fathers, and their own obſervations on the works of nature, together with that ſuperſtition which is inherent in the human frame, have, in all ages, raiſed in the minds of men ſome idea of a ſuperior being. - - - Hence it is, that in the darkeſt times, and amongſt the moſt barbarous nations, the very populace themſelves had ſome faint notion, at leaſt, of a divinity. It would be doing injuſtice to Oſſian, who upon no occaſion, ſhews a narrow mind, to think, that he had not opened his conceptions to that primitive and greateſt of all truths. But let Oſſian's religion be what it will, it is certain he had no knowledge of Chriſtianity, as there is not the leaſt alluſion to it, or any of its rites, in his poems; which abſolutely fixes him to an æra prior to the introduction

duction of that religion. The perſecution begun by Dioclesian, in the year 303, is the moſt probable time in which the firſt dawning of Chriſtianity in the north of Britain can be fixed. - - - The humane and mild character of Conſtantius Chlorus, who commanded then in Britain, induced the perſecuted Chriſtians to take refuge under him. Some of them, through a zeal to propagate their tenets, or through fear, went beyond the pale of the Roman empire, and ſettled among the Caledonians; who were the more ready to hearken to their doctrines, as the religion of the Druids had been exploded ſo long before.

Theſe miſſionaries, either through choice, or to give more weight to the doctrine they advanced, took poſſeſſion of the cells and groves of the Druids; and it was from this retired life they had the name of *Culdees* (*), which in the language of the country ſignified *ſequeſtered perſons.* It was with one of the *Culdees* that Oſſian, in his extreme old age, is ſaid

(*) *Culdich.* to

to have diſputed concerning the Chriſtian religion. This diſpute is ſtill extant, and is couched in verſe, according to the cuſtom of the times. The extreme ignorance on the part of Oſſian, of the Chriſtian tenets, ſhews, that that religion had only been lately introduced, as it is not eaſy to conceive, how one of the firſt rank could be totally unacquainted with a religion that had been known for any time in the country. The diſpute bears the genuine marks of antiquity. The obſolete phraſes and expreſſions peculiar to the times, prove it to be no forgery. If Oſſian then lived at the introduction of Chriſtianity, as by all appearence he did, his epoch will be the latter end of the third, and beginning of the fourth century. What puts this point beyond diſpute, is the alluſion in his poems to the hiſtory of the times.

The exploits of Fingal againſt Caracul (*), the ſon of the *King of the World*, are among the firſt brave actions

(*) *Carac'huil, terrible eye. Carac-'hella, terrible look. Carac-challamh, a ſort of upper garment.*

actions of his youth. A complete poem, which relates to this subject, is printed in this collection.

In the year 210 the emperor Severus, after returning from his expeditions against the Caledonians, at York fell into the tedious illness of which he afterwards died. The Caledonians and Maiatæ, resuming courage from his indisposition, took arms in order to recover the possessions they had lost. The enraged emperor commanded his army to march into their country, and to destroy it with fire and sword. His orders were but ill executed, for his son, Caracalla, was at the head of the army, and his thoughts were entirely taken up with the hopes of his father's death, and with schemes to supplant his brother Geta. - - - He scarcely had entered the enemy's country, when news was brought him that Severus was dead. - - - A sudden peace is patched up with the Caledonians, and, as it appears from Dion Cassius, the country they had lost to Severus was restored to them.

The

The Caracul of Fingal is no other than Caracalla, who, as the ſon of Severus, the Emperor of Rome, whoſe dominions were extended amoſt over the known world, was not without reaſon called in the poems of Oſſian, *the Son of the King of the World.* The ſpace of time between 211, the year Severus died, and the beginning of the fourth century, is not ſo great, but Oſſian the ſon of Fingal, might have ſeen the Chriſtians whom the perſecution under Diocleſian had driven beyond the pale of the Roman empire.

Oſſian, in one of his many lamentations on the death of his beloved ſon Oſcar, mentions among his great actions, a battle which he fought againſt Caros, king of ſhips, on the banks of the winding Carun (*). It is mere than probable, that the Caros mentioned here, is the ſame with the noted uſurper Carauſius, who aſſumed the purple in the year 287, and ſeizing on Britain, defeated the emperor Maximian Herculius, in ſeveral

(*) *Car-avon, Winding river.*

naval engagements, which gives propriety to his being called in Offian's poems, *the King of Ships.* The *winding Carun* is that ſmall river retaining ſtill the name of Carron, and runs in the neighbourhood of Agricola's wall, which Carauſius repaired to obſtruct the incurſions of the Caledonians. Several other paſſages in the poems allude to the wars of the Romans; but the two juſt mentioned clearly; and this account agrees exactly with the Iriſh hiſtories, which place the death of Fingal, the ſon of Comhal, in the year 283, and that of Oſcar and their own celebrated Cairbre, in the year 269.

Some people may imagine, that the alluſions to the Roman hiſtory might have been induſtriouſly inſerted into the poems, to give them the appearance of antiquity. This fraud muſt then have been committed at leaſt three ages ago, as the paſſages in which the alluſions are made, are alluded to often in the compoſitions of thoſe times.

Every

Every one knows what a cloud of ignorance and barbariſm overſpread the north of Europe three hundred years ago. The minds of men, addicted to ſuperſtition, contracted a narrowneſs that deſtroyed genius. Accordingly we find the compoſitions of thoſe times trivial and puerile to the laſt degree. But let it be allowed, that, amidſt all the untoward circumſtances of the age, a genius might ariſe, it is not eaſy to determine what could induce him to give the honour of his compoſitions to an age ſo remote. We find no fact that he has advanced, to favour any deſigns which could be entertained by any man who lived iv the fifteenth century. But ſhould we ſuppoſe a poet, through humour, or for reaſons which cannot be ſeen at this diſtance of time, would aſcribe his own compoſitions to Oſſian, it is next to impoſſible, that he could impoſe upon his countrymen, when all of them were ſo well acquainted with the traditional poems of their anceſtors.

The ſtrongeſt objection to the authenticity of the poems now given to the public under the name of Oſſian, is the improbability of their being handed down by tradition through ſo many centuries. Ages of barbariſm ſome will ſay, could not produce poems abounding with the diſintereſted and generous ſentiments to conſpicuous in the compoſitions of Oſſian; and could theſe ages produce them, it is impoſſible but they muſt be loſt, or altogether corrupted in a long ſucceſſion of barbarous generations.

Theſe objections naturally ſuggeſt themſelves to men unacquainted with the ancient ſtate of the northern parts of Britain. The bards, who were an inferior order of the Druids, did not ſhare their bad fortune. They were ſpared by the victorious king, as it was through their means only he could hope for immortality to his fame. They attended him in the camp, and contributed to eſtabliſh his power by their ſongs. His great actions were magnified, and the populace, who had no ability

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to examine into his character narrowly, were dazzled with his fame in the rhimes of the bards. In the mean time, men aſſumed ſentiments that are rarely to be met with in an age of barbariſm. The bards who were originally the diſciples of the Druids, had their minds opened, and their ideas enlarged, by being initiated in the learning of that celebrated order. They could form a perfect hero in their own minds, and aſcribe that character to their prince. The inferior chiefs made this ideal character the model of their conduct, and by degrees brought their minds to that generous ſpirit which breathes in all the poetry of the times.. The prince, flattered by his bards, and rivalled by his own heroes, who imitated his character as deſcribed in the eulogies of his poets, endeavoured to excel his people in merit, as he was above them in ſtation. This emulation continuing, formed at laſt the general character of the nation, happily compounded of what is noble in barbarity, and virtuous and generous in a poliſhed people.

When virtue in peace, and bravery in war are the characteriſtics of a nation, their actions become intereſting, and their fame worthy of immortality. A generous ſpirit is warmed with noble actions, and becomes ambitious of perpetuating them. This is the true ſource of that divine inſpiration, to which the poets of all ages pretended. When they found their themes inadequate to the warmth of their imaginations, they varniſhed them over with fables, ſupplied by their own fancy, or furniſhed by abſurd traditions. Theſe fables, howerer ridiculous, had their abettors; poſterity either implicitly believed them, or through a vanity natural to mankind, pretended that they did. They loved to place the founders of their families in the days of fable, when poetry, without the fear of contradiction, could give what characters ſhe pleaſed of her heroes. It is to this vanity that we owe the preſervation of what remain of the works of Oſſian. His poetical merit made his heroes famous in a country where heroiſm was much

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eſteemed and admired. The poſterity of theſe heroes, or thoſe who pretended to be deſcended from them, heard with pleaſure the eulogiums of their anceſtors; bards were employed to repeat the poems, and to record the connexion of their patrons with chiefs ſo renowned. Every chief in proceſs of time had a bard in his family, and the office became at laſt hereditary. By the ſucceſſion of theſe bards, the poems concerning the anceſtors of the family were handed down from generation to generation; they were repeated to the whole clan on ſolemn occaſions, and always alluded to in the new compoſitions of the bards. This cuſtom came down near to our own times; and after the bards were diſcontinued, a great number in a clan retained by memory, or committed to writing, their compoſitions, and founded the antiquity of their families on the authority of their poems.

The uſe of letters was not known in the north of Europe till long after the inſtitution of the bards: the records of the families of their patrons, their own, and

more ancient poems were handed down by tradition. Their poetical compoſitions were admirably contrived for that purpoſe. They were adapted to muſic; and the moſt perfect harmony was obſerved. Each verſe was ſo connected with thoſe which preceded or followed it, that if one line had been remembered in a ſtanza, it was almoſt impoſſible to forget the reſt. The cadences followed in ſo natural a gradation, and the words were ſo adapted to the common turn of the voice, after it is raiſed to a certain key, that it was almoſt impoſſible, from a ſimilarity of ſound, to ſubſtitute one word for another. This excellence is peculiar to the Celtic tongue, and is perhaps to be met with in no other language. Nor does this choice of words clog the ſenſe or weaken the expreſſion. The numerous flections of conſonants, and variation in declenſion, make the language very copious.

The deſcendants of the Celtæ, who inhabited Britain and its iſles, were not ſingular in this method of pre-

preſerving the moſt precious monuments of their nation. The ancient laws of the Greeks were couched in verſe, and handed down by tradition. The Spartans, through a long habit, became ſo fond of this cuſtom, that they would never allow their laws to be committed to writing. The actions of great men, and the eulogiums of kings and heroes, were preſerved in the ſame manner. All the hiſtorical monuments of the old Germans were comprehended in their ancient ſongs (*); which were either hymns to their gods, or elegies in praiſe of their heroes, and were intended to perpetuate the great events in their nation which were carefully interwoven with them. This ſpecies of compoſition was not committed to writing, but delivered by oral tradition (†). The care they took to have the poems taught to their children, the uninterrupted cuſtom of repeating them upon certain occaſions, and the happy meaſure of the verſe,

(*) *Tacitus de mor. Germ.*

(†) *Abbé de la Bletterie Remarques ſur la Germanie.*

ſerved to preſerve them for a long time uncorrupted. This oral chronicle of the Germans was not forgot in the eighth century, and it probably would have remained to this day, had not learning, which thinks every thing, that is not committed to writing, fabulous, been introduced. It was from poetical traditions that Garcillaſſo compoſed his account of the Yncas of Peru. The Peruvians had loſt all other monuments of their hiſtory, and it was from ancient poems which his mother, a princeſs of the blood of the Yncas, taught him in his youth, that he collected the materials of his hiſtory. If other nations then, that had been often overun by enemies, and had ſent abroad and received colonies, could, for many ages, preſerve, by oral tradition, their laws and hiſtories uncorrupted, it is much more probable that the ancient Scots, a people ſo free of intermixture with foreigners, and ſo ſtrongly attached to the memory of their anceſtors, had the works of their bards handed down with great purity.

It will ſeem ſtrange to ſome, that poems admired for many centuries in one part of this kingdom ſhould be hitherto unknown in the other; and that the Britiſh, who have carefully traced out the works of genius in other nations, ſhould ſo long remain ſtrangers to their own. This, in a great meaſure, is to be imputed to thoſe who underſtood both languages and never attempted a tranſlation. They, from being acquainted but with detached pieces, or from a modeſty, which perhaps the preſent tranſlator ought, in prudence, to have followed, deſpaired of making the compoſitions of their bards agreeable to an Engliſh reader. The manner of thoſe compoſitions is ſo different from other poems, and the ideas ſo confined to the moſt early ſtate of ſociety, that it was thought they had not enough of variety to pleaſe a poliſhed age.

This was long the opinion of the tranſlator of the following collection; and though he admired the poems, in the original, very early, and gathered part of them

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from tradition for his own amuſement, yet he never had the ſmalleſt hopes of ſeeing them in an Engliſh dreſs. He was ſenſible that the ſtrength and manner of both languages were very different, and that it was next to impoſſible to tranſlate the Galic poetry into any thing of tolerable Engliſh verſe; a proſe tranſlation he could never think of, as is muſt neceſſarily fall ſhort of the majeſty of an original.

It is therefore highly probable, that the compoſitions of Oſſian would have ſtill remained in the obſcurity of a loſt language, had not a gentleman, who has himſelf made a figure in the poetical world, inſiſted with the preſent editor for a literal proſe tranſlation of ſome detached piece. He approved of the ſpecimen, and, through him, copies came to the hands of ſeveral people of taſte in Scotland.

Frequent tranſcription and the corrections of thoſe, who thought they mended the poems by modernizing the ideas, corrupted them to ſuch a degree, that the tranſ-

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lator was induced to hearken to the ſolicitations of a gentleman deſervedly eſteemed in Scotland, for his taſte and knowledge in polite literature, and publiſhed the genuine copies under the title of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*. The fragments, upon their firſt appearance, were ſo much approved of, that ſeveral people of rank, as well as taſte, prevailed with the tranſlator to make a journey to the Highlands and weſtern iſles, in order to recover what remained of the works of Oſſian the ſon of Fingal, the beſt, as well as moſt ancient of thoſe who are celebrated in tradition for their poetical genius. A detail of this journey would be both tedious and unentertaining; let it ſuffice therefore that, after a peregrination of ſix months, the tranſlator collected from tradition, and ſome manuſcripts, all the poems in the following collection, and ſome more ſtill in his hands, though rendered leſs complete by the ravages of time.

The action of the poem that ſtands the firſt, was not the greateſt or moſt celebrated of the exploits of Fingal.

Fingal. His wars were very numerous, and each of them afforded a theme which employed the genius of his ſon. But, excepting the preſent poem, thoſe pieces are in a great meaſure loſt, and there only remain a few fragments of them in the hands of the tranſlator. Tradition has ſtill preſerved, in many places, the ſtory of the poems, and many now living have heard them, in their youth, repeated.

The complete work, now printed, would, in a ſhort time, have ſhared the fate of the reſt. The genius of the highlanders has ſuffered a great change within theſe few years. The communication with the reſt of the iſland is open, and the introduction of trade and manufactures has deſtroyed that leiſure which was formerly dedicated to hearing and repeating the poems of ancient times. Many have now learned to leave their mountains, and ſeek their fortunes in a milder climate; and though a certain *amor patriæ* may ſometimes bring them back, they have, during their abſence, imbibed enough

enough of foreign manners to deſpiſe the cuſtoms of their anceſtors. Bards have been long diſuſed, and the ſpirit of genealogy has greatly ſubſided. Men begin to be leſs devoted to their chiefs, and conſanguinity is not ſo much regarded. When property is eſtabliſhed, the human mind confines its views to the pleaſure it procures. It does not go back to antiquity, or look forward to ſucceeding ages. The cares of life increaſe, and the actions of other times no longer amuſe. Hence it is, that the taſte for their ancient poetry is at a low ebb among the highlanders. They have not, however, thrown of the good qualities of their anceſtors. Hoſpitality ſtill ſubſiſts, and an uncommon civility to ſtrangers. Friendſhip is inviolable, and revenge leſs blindly followed than formerly.

To ſpeak of the poetical merit of the poems, would be an anticipation on the judgment of the public: And all that can be ſaid of the tranſlation, is, that it is literal

literal, and that ſimplicity is ſtudied. The arrangement of the words in the original is imitated, and the inverſions of the ſtyle obſerved. As the trauſlator claims no merit from his verſion, he hopes for the indulgence of the public where he fails. He wiſhes that the imperfect ſemblance he draws, may not prejudice the world againſt an original, which contains what is beautiful in ſimplicity, and grand in the ſublime.

FINGAL,

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK I.

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ARGUMENT to Book I.

Cuchullin, (general of the Iriſh tribes, in the minority of Cormac, king of Ireland) ſitting alone beneath a tree, at the gate of Tura, a caſtle of Ulſter, (the other chiefs having gone on a hunting party to Cromla, a neighbouring hill) is informed of the landing of Swaran, king of Lochlin, by Moran, the ſon of Fithil, one of his ſcouts. He convenes the chiefs; a council is held, and diſputes run high about giving battle to the enemy. Connal, the petty king of Togorma, and an intimate friend of Cuchullin, was for retreating till Fingal, king of thoſe Caledonians who inhabited the north-weſt coaſt of Scotland, whoſe aid had been previouſly ſollicited, ſhould arrive; but Calmar, the ſon of Matha, lord of Lara, a country in Connaught, was for engaging the enemy immediately. — Cuchullin, of himſelf willing to fight, went into the opinion of Calmar. Marching towards the enemy, he miſſed three of his braveſt heroes, Fergus, Duchomar, and Caithbat. Fergus arriving, tells

tells Cuchullin of the death of the two other chiefs; which introduces the affecting episode of Morna, the daughter of Cormac — The army of Cuchullin is deſcried at a diſtance by Swaran, who ſent the ſon of Arno to obſerve the motions of the enemy, while he himſelf ranged his forces in order of battle. —— The ſon of Arno returning to Swaran, deſcribes to him Cuchullin's chariot, and the terrible appearance of that hero. The armies engage, but night coming on, leaves the victory undecided. Cuchullin, according to the hoſpitality of the times, ſends to Swaran a formal invitation to a feaſt, by his bard Carril, the ſon of Kinfena. — Swaran refuſes to come. Carril relates to Cuchullin the ſtory of Grudar and Braſſolis. A party, by Connal's advice, is ſent to obſerve the enemy; which cloſes the action of the firſt day.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK I.

CVCHVLLIN (1) ſat by Tura's wall; by the tree of the ruſtling leaf — — — His ſpear leaned againſt the moſſy rock. His ſhield lay by him on the graſs. As he thought of mighty Car-

(1) Cuchullin, or rather Cuth-Ullin, *the voice of Ullin*, a poetical name given the ſon of Semo by the bards, from his commanding the forces of the Province of Ulſter againſt the Ferbolg or Belgæ, who were in poſſeſſion of Connaught. Cuchullin when very young married Bragela the daughter of Sorglan, and paſſing over into Ireland, lived for ſome time with Connal, grandſon by a daughter to Congal the petty king of Ulſter. His wiſdom and valour in a ſhort time gained him ſuch reputation,

Carbar (2), a hero whom he ſlew in war; the ſcout (3) of the ocean came, Moran (4) the ſon of Fithil. Riſe

that in the minority of Cormac the ſupreme king of Ireland, he was choſen guardian to the young king, and ſole manager of the war againſt Swaran king of Lochlin. After a ſeries of great actions he was killed in battle ſomewhere in Connaught, in the twenty-ſeventh year of his age. He was ſo remarkable for his ſtrength, that to deſcribe a ſtrong man it has paſſed into a proverb. "He has the ſtrength of Cuchullin." They ſhew the remains of his palace at Dunſcaich in the Iſle of Skye; and a ſtone to which he bound his dog Luath, goes ſtill by his name.

(2) Cairbar or Cairbre ſignifies a ſtrong man.

(3) We may conclude from Cuchullin's applying ſo early for foreign aid, that the Iriſh were not then ſo numerous as they have ſince been; which is a great preſumption againſt the high antiquities of that people. We have the teſtimony of Tacitus that one legion only was thought ſufficient, in the time of Agricola, to reduce the whole iſland under the Roman yoke; which would not probably have been the caſe had the Iſland been inhabited for any number of centuries before.

(4) Moran ſignifies many; and Fithil, or rather Filí, *an inferior bard.*

Riſe, ſaid the youth, Cuchullin, riſe; I ſee the ſhips of Swaran. Cuchullin, many are the foe: many the heroes of the dark-rolling ſea.

Moran! replied the blue-eyed chief, thou ever trembleſt, ſon of Fithil. Thy fears have much increaſed the foe. Perhaps it is the king (5) of the lonely hills coming to aid me on green Ullin's plains.

I ſaw their chief, ſays Moran, tall as a rock of ice. His ſpear is like that blaſted fir. His ſhield like the riſing moon. He ſat on a rock on the ſhore: his dark hoſt rolled, like clouds, around him. - - - - Many, chief of men! I ſaid, many are our hands of war. - - - - - Well art thou named,

(5) Fingal the ſon of Comhal, and Morna the daughter of Thaddu. His grandfather was Trathal, and great grandfather Trenmor, both of whom are often mentioned in the poem. — Trenmor, according to tradition, had two ſons; Trathal, who ſucceeded him in the Kingdom of Morven, and Conar, called by the bards *Conar the great*, who was elected king of all Ireland, and was the anceſtor of that Cormac who ſat on the Iriſh throne when the invaſion of Swaran happened. It may not be improper here to obſerve, that the accent ought always to be placed on the laſt ſyllable of Fingal.

named, the Mighty Man, but many mighty men are ſeen from Tura's windy walls. - - - - He anſwered, like a wave on a rock, who in this land appears like me? Heroes ſtand not in my preſence: they fall to earth beneath my hand. None can meet Swaran in the fight but Fingal, king of ſtormy hills. Once we wreſtled on the heath of Malmor, (6) and our heels overturned the wood. Rocks fell from their place; and rivulets, changing their courſe, fled murmuring from our ſtrife. Three days we renewed our ſtrife, and heroes ſtood at a diſtance and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal ſays, that the king of the ocean fell; but Swaran ſays, he ſtood. Let dark Cuchullin yield to him that is ſtrong as the ſtorms of Malmor.

No: replied the blue-eyed chief, I will never yield to man. Dark Cuchullin will be great or dead. Go, Fithil's ſon, and take my ſpear: ſtrike the ſounding ſhield of Cabait. (7) It hangs at Tura's

(6) Meal-mór — *a great hill.*

(7) Cabait, or rather Cathbait, grandfather tho the hero, was ſo remarkable for his valour, that his ſhield was made uſe of to alarm his poſterity to the battles of the family. We find Fingal making the

ra's ruſtling gate; the ſound of peace is not the voice. My heroes ſhall hear on the hill.

He went and ſtruck the boſſy ſhield. The hills and their rocks replied. The ſound ſpread along the wood: deer ſtart by the lake of roes. Curach (8) leapt from the ſounding rock; and Connal of the bloody ſpear. Crugal's (9) breaſt of ſnow beats high. The ſon of Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the ſhield of war, ſaid Ronnar, the ſpear of Cuchullin, ſaid Lugar. - - - - Son of the ſea, put on thy arms! Calmar lift thy ſounding ſteel! Puno! horrid hero, riſe: Cairbar from thy red tree of Cromla. Bend thy white Knee, O Eth; and deſcend from the ſtreams of Lena. —— Ca-olt ſtretch thy white ſide as thou moveſt along the whiſtling heath of Mora: thy ſide that is white as the foam of the troubled ſea, when the dark winds pour it on the murmuring rocks of Cuthon. (10)

Now

the ſame uſe of his own ſhield in the 4th book. — A horn was the moſt common inſtrument to call the army together before the invention of bagpipes.

(8) Cu-raoch ſignifies *the madneſs of battle.*

(9) Cruth-geal —— *fair-complexioned.*

(10) Cu-thón — *the mournful ſound of waves.*

Now I behold the chiefs in the pride of their former deeds; their ſouls are kindled at the battles of old, and the actions of other times. Their eyes are like flames of fire and roll in ſearch of the foes of the land. — Their mighty hands are on their ſwords; and lightning pours from their ſides of ſteel. — They came like ſtreams from the mountains; each ruſhed roaring from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle in the armour of their fathers. — Gloomy and dark their heroes followed, like the gathering of the rainy clouds behind the red meteors of heaven. — The ſounds of craſhing arms aſcend. The grey dogs howl between. Unequally burſts the ſong of battle; and rocking Cromla (11) echoes round. On Lena's duſky heath they ſtood, like miſt (12) that ſhades the hills of autumn

(11) Crom-leach ſignified a place of worſhip among the Druids. It is here the proper name of a hill on the coaſt of Ullin or Ulſter.

(12) —— νεφέλῃσιν ἐοικότες ἅς τε Κρονίων
Νηνεμίης, ἕσησεν ἐπ' ἀκροπολοισιν ὄρεσσιν
Ατρέμας. Hom. Il. 5. v. 522.

So when th' embattled clouds in dark array,
Along the ſkies their gloomy lines diſplay;
The low-hung vapours motionleſs and ſtill
Reſt on the ſummits of the ſhaded hill. Pope.

autumn: when broken and dark it ſettles high, and lifts its head to heaven.

Hail, ſaid Cuchullin, ſons of the narrow vales, hail ye hunters of the deer. Another ſport is drawing near: it is like the dark rolling of that wave on the coaſt. Shall we fight, ye ſons of war! or yield green Innisfail (1) to Lochlin? — O Connal (2) ſpeak, thou firſt of men! thou breaker of the ſhields! thou haſt often fought with Lochlin; wilt thou lift thy father's ſpear?

Cuchullin! calm the chief replied, the ſpear of Connal is keen. It delights to ſhine in battle, and to

(1) Ireland ſo called from a colony that ſettled there called Falans. — Innis-fail, *i. e.* the iſland of the Fa-il or Falans.

(2) Connal, the friend of Cuchullin, was the ſon of Cathbait prince of Tongorma or the *iſland of blue waves*, probably one of the Hebrides. His mother was Fioncoma the daughter of Congal. He had a ſon by Foba of Conachar-neſſar, who was afterwards king of Ulſter. For his ſervices in the war againſt Swaran he had lands conferred on him, which, from his name, were called Tir-chonnail or Tir-connel, *i. e.* the land of Connal.

to mix with the blood of thouſands. But tho' my hand is bent on war, my heart is for the peace of Erin. (3) Behold, thou firſt in Cormac's war, the ſable fleet of Swaran. His maſts are as numerous on our coaſt as reeds in the lake of Lego. His ſhips are like foreſts cloathed with miſt, when the trees yield by turns to the ſqually wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace. — Fingal would ſhun his arm the firſt of mortal men: Fingal that ſcatters the mighty, as ſtormy winds the heath; when the ſtreams roar thro' echoing Cona: and night ſettles with all her clouds on the hill.

Fly, thou chief of peace, ſaid Calmar, (4) the ſon of Matha; Fly, Connal, to thy ſilent hills, where the ſpear of battle never ſhone; purſue the dark-brown deer of Cromla: and ſtop with thine arrows

(3) Erin, a name of Ireland; from *ear* or *iar* Weſt, and *in* an iſland. This name was not always confined to Ireland, for there is the higheſt probability that the *Ierne* of the ancients was Britain to the North of the Forth. — For Ierne is ſaid to be to the North of Britain, which could not be meant of Ireland.

Strabo, l. 2. & 4. Casaub, l. 2.

(4) Cálm-er, *a ſtrong man.*

arrows the bounding roes of Lena. But, blue-eyed ſon of Semo, Cuchullin, ruler of the war, ſcatter thou the ſons of Lochlin (5), and roar thro' the ranks of their pride. Let no veſſel of the kingdom of Snow bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inis-tore (6). O ye dark winds of Erin riſe! roar ye whirlwinds of the heath! Amidſt the tempeſt let me die, torn in a cloud by angry ghoſts of men; amidſt the tempeſt let Calmar die, if ever chace was ſport to him ſo much as the battle of ſhields.

Calmar! ſlow replied the chief, I never fled, O Matha's ſon. I was ſwift with my friends in battle, but ſmall is the fame of Connal. The battle was won in my preſence, and the valiant overcame. But, ſon of Semo, hear my voice, regard the ancient throne of Cormac. Give wealth and half the land for peace, till Fingal come with battle. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the ſword and ſpear. My joy ſhall be in the midſt of thouſands, and my ſoul brighten in the gloom of the fight. To

(5) The Galic name of Scandinavia in general; in a more confined ſenſe that of the peninſula of Jutland.

(6) Innis-tore, *the Iſland of whales*, the ancient name of the Orkney iſlands.

To me, Cuchullin replies, pleaſant is the noiſe of arms: pleaſant as the thunder of heaven before the ſhower of Spring. But gather all the ſhining tribes that I may view the ſons of war. Let them move along the heath, bright as the ſun-ſhine before a ſtorm; when the weſt wind collects the clouds, and the oaks of Morven echo along the ſhore.

But where are my friends in battle? The companions of my arm in danger? Where art thou, white-boſom'd Cathbat? Where is that cloud in war, Duchomar (7)? and haſt thou left me, O Fergus (8)! in the day of the ſtorm? Fergus, firſt in our joy at the feaſt! ſon of Roſſa! arm of death! comeſt thou like a roe (9) from Malmor? Like a hart from the ecchoing hills? —— Hail thou ſon of Roſſa! what ſhades the ſoul of war?

Four ſtones (10), replied the chief, riſe on the grave of Cathbat. —— Theſe hands have laid in earth Ducho-

(7) Dubhchomar, *a black well-ſhaped man.*

(8) Fear-guth, — *the man of the word;* or a commander of army.

(9) Be thou like a roe or young hart on the mountains of Bether. Solomon's Song.

(10) This paſſage alludes to the manner of burial among

Duchomar, that cloud in war. Cathbat, thou ſon of Torman, thou wert a ſun-beam on the hill. —— And thou, O valiant Duchomar, like the miſt of marſhy Lano; when it ſails over the plains of autumn and brings death to the people. Morna, thou faireſt of maids! calm is thy ſleep in the cave of the rock. Thou haſt fallen in darkneſs like a ſtar, that ſhoots athwart the deſart, when the traveller is alone, and mourns the tranſient beam.

Say, ſaid Semo's blue-eyed ſon, ſay how fell the chiefs of Erin? Fell they by the ſons of Lochlin, ſtriving in the battle of heroes? Or what confines the chiefs of Cromla to the dark and narrow houſe (11)? Cath-

among the ancient Scots. They opened a grave ſix or eight feet deep: the bottom was lined with fine clay; and on this they laid the body of the deceaſed, and, if a warrior, his ſword, and the heads of twelve arrows by his ſide. Above they laid another ſtratum of clay, in which they placed the horn of a deer, the ſymbol of hunting. The whole was covered with a fine mold, and four ſtones placed on end to mark the extent of the grave. Theſe are the four ſtones alluded to here.

(11) The grave. —— The houſe appointed for all living. JOS.

Cathbat, replied the hero, fell by the ſword of Duchomar at the oak of the noiſy ſtreams. Duchomar came to Tura's cave, and ſpoke to the lovely Morna.

Morna (12), faireſt among women, lovely daughter of Cormac-cairbar. Why in the circle of ſtones; in the cave of the rock alone? The ſtream murmurs hoarſely. The old tree's groan is in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee, and dark are the clouds of the ſky. But thou art like ſnow on the heath; and thy hair like the miſt of Cromla; when it curls on the rocks, and ſhines to the beam of the weſt. —— Thy breaſts are like two ſmooth rocks ſeen from Branno of the ſtreams. Thy arms like two white pillars in the halls of the mighty Fingal.

From whence, the white-armed maid replied, from whence, Duchomar the moſt gloomy of men? Dark are thy brows and terrible. Red are thy rolling eyes. Does Swaran appear on the ſea? What of the foe, Duchomar?

From the hill I return, O Morna, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds. Three have I ſlain with my bended yew. Three with my long bounding dogs of the

(12) Muirne or Morna, *a woman beloved by all.*

the chace. —— Lovely daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my ſoul. —— I have ſlain one ſtately deer for thee. —— High was his branchy head; and fleet his feet of wind.

Duchomar! calm the maid replied, I love thee not, thou gloomy man. —— Hard is thy heart of rock, and dark thy terrible brow. But Cathbat, thou ſon of Torman (1), thou art the love of Morna. Thou art like a ſun-beam on the hill in the day of the gloomy ſtorm. Saweſt thou the ſon of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Cathbat.

And long ſhall Morna wait, Duchomar ſaid, his blood is on my ſword. —— Long ſhall Morna wait for him. He fell at Branno's ſtream. High on Cromla I will raiſe his tomb, daughter of Cormac-cairbar; but fix thy love on Duchomar, his arm is ſtrong as a ſtorm. ——

And is the ſon of Torman fallen? ſaid the maid of the tearful eye. Is he fallen on his echoing heath; the youth with the breaſt of ſnow? he that was firſt in the

(1) Torman, *Thunder.* This is the true origin of the Jupiter Taramis of the ancients.

the chace of the hill; the foe of the ſtrangers of the ocean. —— Duchomar thou art dark (2) indeed, and cruel is thy arm to Morna. But give me that ſword, my foe; I love the blood of Caithbat.

He gave the ſword to her tears; but ſhe pierced his manly breaſt. He fell, like the bank of a mountain-ſtream; ſtretched out his arm and ſaid;

Daughter of Cormac-cairbar, thou haſt ſlain Duchomar. The ſword is cold in my breaſt: Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to Moina (3) the maid; Duchomar was the dream of her night. She will raiſe my tomb; and the hunter ſhall ſee it and praiſe me. But draw the ſword from my breaſt; Morna, the ſteel is cold.

She came, in all her tears, ſhe came, and drew it from his breaſt. He pierced her white ſide with ſteel; and ſpread her fair locks on the ground. Her burſting blood ſounds from her ſide: and her white arm is ſtained with red. Rolling in death ſhe lay, and Tura's cave anſwered to her groans. ——

Peace,

(2) She alludes to his name —— *the dark man.*

(3) Moina, *ſoft in temper and perſon.*

Peace, ſaid Cuchullin, to the ſouls of the heroes; their deeds were great in danger. Let them ride around [4] me on clouds; and ſhew their features of war: that my ſoul may be ſtrong in danger; my arm like the thunder of heaven. —— But be thou on a moon-beam, O Morna, near the window of my reſt; when my thoughts are of peace; and the din of arms is over. —— Gather the ſtrength of the tribes, and move to the wars of Erin. —— Attend the car of my battles; rejoice in the noiſe of my courſe. —— Place three ſpears by my ſide; follow the bounding of my ſteeds; that my ſoul may be ſtrong in my friends, when the battle darkens round the beams of my ſteel.

As ruſhes a ſtream (5) of foam from the dark ſhady ſteep of Cromla; when the thunder is rolling above,

[4] It was the opinion then, as indeed it is to this day, of ſome of the highlanders, that the ſouls of the deceaſed hovered round their living friends; and ſometimes appeared to them when they were about to enter on any great undertaking.

(5) Ως δ' ὅτε χείμαῤῥοι ποταμοὶ, κατ' ὄρεσφι ῥέοντες

above, and dark-brown night on half the hill. So fierce, ſo vaſt, ſo terrible ruſhed on the ſons of Erin. The chief like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows follow, poured valour forth as a ſtream, rolling his might along the ſhore.

The ſons of Lochlin heard the noiſe as the ſound of a winter-ſtream. Swaran ſtruck his boſſy ſhield, and called the ſon of Arno. What murmur rolls along the hill like the gathered flies of evening? The ſons of Innis-fail deſcend, or ruſtling winds roar in the diſtant wood. Such is the noiſe of Gormal before the white tops of my waves ariſe. O ſon of Arno, aſcend the hill and view the dark face of the heath.

He

Ες μισγάϊκείαν συμβάλλετον ὄβριμον ὕδωρ,
Κρουνῶν ἐκ μεγάλων κοίλης ἔντοσθε χαράδρης.
Hom.

As torrents roll encreas'd by numerous rills
With rage impetuous down the ecchoing hills;
Ruſh to the vales, and pour'd along the plain,
Roar thro' a thouſand channels tho the main.
Pope.

Aut ubi decurſu rapido de montibus altis,
Dant ſonitum ſpumoſi amnes, & in æquora currunt,
Quiſque ſuum populatus iter, Virg.

He went, and trembling, ſwift returned. His eyes rolled wildly round. His heart beat high againſt his ſide. His words were faultering, broken, ſlow.

Riſe, ſon of ocean, riſe chief of the dark-brown ſhields. I ſee the dark, the mountain-ſtream of the battle: the deep-moving ſtrength of the ſons of Erin ——— The car, the car of battle comes, like the flame of death; the rapid car of Cuchullin, the noble ſon of Semo. It bends behind like a wave near a rock; like the golden miſt of the heath. Its ſides are emboſſed with ſtones, and ſparkle like the ſea round the boat of night. Of poliſhed yew is its beam, and its ſeat of the ſmootheſt bone. The ſides are repleniſhed with ſpears; and the bottom is the footſtool of heroes. Before the right ſide of the car is ſeen the ſnorting horſe. The highmaned, broad-breaſted, proud, high-leaping, ſtrong ſteed of the hill. Loud and reſounding is his hoof; the ſpreading of his mane above is like that ſtream of ſmoke on the heath. Bright are the ſides of the ſteed, and his name is Sulin-Sifadda.

Before the left ſide of the car is ſeen the ſnorting horſe. The dark-maned, high-headed, ſtrong

hooffed, fleet, bounding ſon of the hill: his name is Duſronnal among the ſtormy ſons of the ſword. —— A thouſand thongs bind the car on high. Hard poliſhed bits ſhine in a wreath of foam. Thin thongs bright-ſtudded with gems, bend on the ſtately necks of the ſteeds. —— The ſteeds that like wreaths of miſt fly over the ſtreamy vales. The wildneſs of deer is in their courſe, the ſtrength of the eagle deſcending on her prey. Their noiſe is like the blaſt of winter on the ſides of the ſnow-headed Gormal (6).

Within the car is ſeen the chief; the ſtrong ſtormy ſon of the ſword; the hero's name is Cuchullin, ſon of Semo king of ſhells. His red cheek is like my poliſhed yew. The look of his blue-rolling eye is wide beneath the dark arch of his brow. His hair flies from his head like a flame, as bending forward he wields the ſpear. Fly, king of ocean, fly; he comes, like a ſtorm, along the ſtreamy vale.

When did I fly, replied the king, from the battle of many ſpears? When did I fly ſon of Arno, chief of the little ſoul? I met the ſtorm of Gormal when the foam of my waves was high; I met the ſtorm of the

(6) A hill of Lochlin.

the clouds and ſhall I fly from a hero? Were it Fingal himſelf my ſoul ſhould not darken before him. — Riſe to the battle, my thouſands; pour round me like the echoing main. Gather round the bright ſteel of your king; ſtrong as the rocks of my land; that meet the ſtorm with joy, and ſtretch their dark woods to the wind.

As autumn's (7) dark ſtorms pour from two echoing hills, towards each other approached the heroes, —— As two dark ſtreams from high rocks meet, and

(7) The reader may compare this paſſage with a ſimilar one in Homer. Iliad. 4. v. 446.

Now ſhield with ſhield, with helmet helmet clos'd.
To armour armour, lance to lance oppos'd,
Hoſt againſt hoſt, with ſhadowy ſquadrons drew,
The ſounding darts in iron tempeſts flew;
With ſtreaming blood the ſlipp'ry fields are dy'd,
And ſlaughter'd heroes ſwell the dreadful tide.
POPE.

Statius has very happily imitated Homer.

Jam clypeus clypeis, umbone repellitur umbo,
Enſe minax enſis, pede pes, & Cuſpide cuſpis, &c.
Arms on armour craſhing, bray'd
Horrible diſcord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots rag'd, &c. MILTON.

and mix and roar on the plain; loud, rough and dark in battle meet Lochlin and Innis-fail. Chief mixed his ſtrokes with chief, and man with man; ſteel, clanging, ſounded on ſteel, helmets are cleft on high. Blood burſts and ſmoaks around. ——— Strings twang on the poliſhed yews. Darts ruſh along the ſky. Spears fall like the circles of light that gild the ſtormy face of night.

As the troubled noiſe of the ocean when roll the waves on high; as the laſt peal of the thunder of heaven, ſuch is the noiſe of battle. Though Cormac's hundred bards were there to give the war to ſong; feeble were the voices of a hundred bards to ſend the deaths to future times. For many were the falls of the heroes; and wide poured the blood of the valiant.

Mourn, ye ſons of ſong, the death of the noble Sithallin (8). ——— Let the ſighs of Fiöna riſe on the dark heaths of her lovely Ardan. ——— They fell, like two hinds of the deſart, by the hands of the mighty Swaran; when, in the midſt of thouſands he roared; like the ſhrill ſpirit of a ſtorm, that ſits dim,

(8) Sithallin ſignifies *a handſome man*; — Fiöna, *a fair maid*; — and Ardan, *pride*.

dim, on the clouds of Gormal, and enjoys the death of the mariner.

Nor ſlept thy hand by thy ſide, chief of the iſle of miſt (9); many were the deaths of thine arm, Cuchullin, thou ſon of Semo. His ſword was like the beam of heaven when it pierces the ſons of the vale; when the people are blaſted and fall, and all the hills are burning around. —— Duſronnal (10) ſnorted over the bodies of heroes; and Sifadda (11) bathed his hoof in blood. The battle lay behind them as groves overturned on the deſart of Cromla; when the blaſt has paſſed the heath laden with the ſpirits of night.

Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Iniſtore (12), bend thy fair head over the waves, thou

(9) The Iſle of Sky; not improperly called the *Iſle of miſt*; as its high hills, which catch the clouds from the weſtern ocean, occaſion almoſt continual rains.

(10) One of Cuchullin's horſes. Dubhſtron-gheal.

(11) Sith-fadda, *i. e. a long ſtride.*

(12) *The maid of Iniſtore* was the daughter of Gorlo king of Iniſtore or Orkney iſlands. Trenar was brother to the king of Iniſcon, ſuppoſed to be

thou fairer than the ſpirit of the hills; when it moves in a ſun-beam at noon over the ſilence of Morven. He is fallen! thy youth is low; pale beneath the ſword of Cuchul'lin. No more ſhall valour raiſe the youth to match the blood of kings. —— Trenar, lovely Trenar died, thou maid of Iniſtore. His gray dogs are howling at home, and ſee his paſſing ghoſt. His bow is in the hall unſtrung. No ſound is in the heath of his hinds.

As roll a thouſand waves to the rocks, ſo Swaran's hoſt came on; as meets a rock a thouſand waves, ſo Innis-fail met Swaran. Death raiſes all his voices around, and mixes with the ſound of ſhields. —— Each hero is a pillar of darkneſs, and the ſword a beam of fire in his hand. The field echoes from

one of the iſlands of Shetland. The Orkneys and Shetland were at that time ſubject to the king of Lochlin. We find that the dogs of Trenar are ſenſible at home of the death of their maſter, the very inſtant he is killed. —— It was the opinion of the times, that the ſouls of heroes went immediately after death to the hills of their country, and the ſcenes they frequented the moſt happy time of their life. It was thought too that dogs and horſes ſaw the ghoſts of the deceaſed.

from wing to wing, as a hundred hammers that riſe by turns on the red ſon of the furnace.

Who are theſe on Lena's heath that are ſo gloomy and dark? Who are theſe like two clouds (1), and their ſwords like lightning above them? The little hills are troubled around, and the rocks tremble with all their moſs. —— Who is it but Ocean's ſon and the car-borne chief of Erin? Many are the anxious eyes of their friends, as they ſee them dim on the heath. Now night conceals the chiefs in her clouds, and ends the terrible fight.

It was on Cromla's ſhaggy ſide that Dorglas placed the deer (2), the early fortune of the chace, before

(1) As when two black clouds
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caſpian. MILTON.

(2) The ancient manner of preparing feaſt after hunting is handed down by tradition. —— A pit lined with ſmooth ſtones vas made; and near it ſtood a heap of ſmooth flat ſtones of the flint kind. The ſtones as well as the pit were properly heated with heath. Then they laid ſome veniſon in the bottom, and a ſtratum of the ſtones above it; and thus they did alternately till the pit was full. The whole was covered over

fore the heroes left the hill. —— A hundred youths collect the heath; ten heroes blow the fire; three hundred chuſe the poliſh'd ſtones. The feaſt is ſmoaking wide.

Cuchullin, chief of Erin's war, reſumed his mighty ſoul. He ſtood upon his beamy ſpear, and ſpoke to the ſon of ſongs; to Carril of other times, the gray-haired ſon of Kinfena (3). Is this feaſt ſpread for me alone and the king of Lochlin on Ullin's ſhore, far from the deer of his hills, and ſounding halls of his feaſts? Riſe, Carril of other times, and carry my words to Swaran; tell him that came from the roaring of waters, that Cuchullin gives his feaſt. Here let him liſten to the ſound of my groves amidſt the clouds of night. —— For cold and bleak the bluſtering winds ruſh over the foam of his ſeas. Here let him praiſe the trembling harp, and hear the ſongs of heroes.

Old Carril went, with ſofteſt voice, and called the king of dark-brown ſhields. Riſe from the ſkins of

with heath to confine the ſteam. Whether this is probable I cannot ſay; but ſome pits are ſhewn, which the vulgar ſay, were uſed in that manner.

(3) Cean-ſeana, *i. e. the head of the people.*

of thy chace, riſe, Swaran king of groves. —— Cuchullin gives the joy of ſhells; partake the feaſt of Erin's blue-eyed chief.

He anſwered like the ſullen ſound of Cromla before a ſtorm. Though all thy daughters, Innisfail! ſhould extend their arms of ſnow; raiſe high the heavings of their breaſts, and ſoftly roll their eyes of love; yet, fixed as Lochlin's thouſand rocks, here Swaran ſhall remain; till morn, with the young beams of my eaſt, ſhall light me to the death of Cuchullin. Pleaſant to my ear is Lochlin's wind. It ruſhes over my ſeas. It ſpeaks aloft in all my ſhrowds, and brings my green foreſts to my mind; the green foreſts of Gormal that often echoed to my winds, when my ſpear was red in the chace of the boar. Let dark Cuchullin yield to me the ancient throne of Cormac, or Erin's torrents ſhall ſhew from their hills the red foam of the blood of his pride.

Sad is the ſound of Swaran's voice, ſaid Carril, of other times: ——

Sad to himſelf alone, ſaid the blue-eyed ſon of Semo. But, Carril, raiſe thy voice on high, and

tell the deeds of other times. Send thou the night away in ſong; and give the joy of grief. For many heroes and maids of love have moved on Innis-fail. And lovely are the ſongs of woe that are heard on Albion's rocks; when the noiſe of the chace is over, and the ſtreams of Cona anſwer to the voice of Oſſian (4).

In other days (5); Carril replies, came the ſons of Ocean to Erin. A thouſand veſſels bounded over the waves to Ullin's lovely plains. The ſons of Innis-

(4) Oſſian the ſon of Fingal and author of the poem. One cannot but admire the addreſs of the poet in putting his own praiſe ſo naturally into the mouth of Cuchullin. The Cona here mentioned is perhaps that ſmall river that runs through Glenco in Argyleſhire. One of the hills which environ that romantic valley is ſtill called Scorna-fena, or the hill of Fingal's people.

(5) This epiſode is introduced with propriety. Calmar and Connal, two of the Iriſh heroes, had diſputed warmly before the battle about engaging the enemy. Carril endeavours to reconcile them with the ſtory of Cairbar and Grudar; who, tho' enemies before, fought *ſide by ſide* in the war. The poet obtained his aim, for we find Calmar and Connal perfectly reconciled in the third book.

nis-fail aroſe to meet the race of dark-brown ſhields. Cairbar, firſt of men, was there, and Grudar, ſtately youth. Long had they ſtrove for the ſpotted bull, that lowed on Golbun's (6) echoing heath. Each claimed him as his own; and death was often at the point of their ſteel.

Side by ſide the heroes fought, and the ſtrangers of Ocean fled. Whoſe name was fairer on the hill than the name of Cairbar and Grudar! —— But ah! why ever lowed the bull on Golbun's echoing heath? They ſaw him leaping like the ſnow. The wrath of the chiefs returned.

On Lubar's (7) graſſy banks they fought, and Grudar like a ſun-beam, fell. Fierce Cairbar came to the vale of the echoing Tura, where Braſſolis (8), faireſt of his ſiſters, all alone, raiſed the ſong of grief. She ſung of the actions of Grudar, the youth of her ſecret ſoul. —— She mourned him in the field

(6) Golb-bhean, as well as Cromleach, ſignifies *a krooked hill*. It is here the name of a mountain in the county of Sligo.

(7) Lubar —— a river in Ulſter. *Labhar*, loud, noiſy.

(8) Braſſolis ſignifies *a woman with a white breaſt*.

field of blood; but ſtill ſhe hoped for his return. Her white boſom is ſeen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night. Her voice was ſofter than the harp to raiſe the ſong of grief. Her ſoul was fixed on Grudar; the ſecret look of her eye was his—When ſhalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty in the war? ——

Take, Braſſolis, Cairbar came and ſaid, take, Braſſolis, this ſhield of blood. Fix it on high within my hall, the armour of my foe. Her ſoft heart beat againſt her ſide. Diſtracted, pale, ſhe flew. She found her youth in all his blood; ſhe died on Cromla's heath. Here reſts their duſt, Cuchullin; and theſe two lonely yews, ſprung from their tombs, wiſh to meet on high. Fair was Braſſolis on the plain, and Grudar on the hill. The bard ſhall preſerve their names, and repeat them to future times.

Pleaſant is thy voice, O Carril, ſaid the blue-eyed chief of Erin; and lovely are the words of other times. They are like the calm ſhower (9) of ſpring,

(9) Homer compares ſoft piercing words tho the fall ſnow.

— επεα νιφαδεσσιν εοικοτα χειμερίησιν.
But when he ſpeaks, what elocntion flows!
Like the ſoft fleeces of deſcending ſnows. Pope.

ſpring, when the ſun looks on the field, and the light cloud flies over the hills. O ſtrike the harp in praiſe of my love, the lonely ſun-beam of Dunſcaich. Strike the harp in the praiſe of Bragéla (10), of her that I left in the Iſle of Miſt, the ſpouſe of Semo's ſon. Doſt thou raiſe thy fair face from the rock to find the ſails of Cuchullin? —— The ſea is rolling far diſtant, and its white foam ſhall deceive thee for my ſails. Retire, for it is night, my love, and the dark winds ſigh in thy hair. Retire to the halls of my feaſts, and think of the times that are paſt: for I will not return till the ſtorm of war is ceaſed. O Connal, ſpeak of wars and arms, and ſend her from my mind, for lovely with her raven-hair is the white-boſomed daughter of Sorglan.

Connal

(10) Bragéla was the daughter of Sorglan, and the wife of Cuchullin. —— Cuchullin, upon the death of Artho, ſupreme king of Ireland, paſſed over into Ireland, probably by Fingal's order, to take upon him the adminiſtration of affairs in that kingdom during the minority of Cormac the ſon of Artho. He left his wife Bragéla in Dunſcaich, the ſeat of the family, in the iſle of Sky, where the remains of his palace is ſtill ſhewn; and a ſtone, to which he bound his dog Luath, goes ſtill by his name.

Connal, ſlow to ſpeak, replied, Guard againſt the race of Ocean. Send thy troop of night abroad, and watch the ſtrength of Swaran. —— Cuchullin! I am for peace till the race of the deſart come; till Fingal come, the firſt of men, and beam, like the ſun, on our fields.

The hero ſtruck the ſhield of his alarms —— the warriors of the night moved on. The reſt lay in the heath of the deer, and ſlept amidſt the duſky wind. —— The ghoſts (11) of the lately dead were near, and ſwam on gloomy clouds. And far diſtant, in the dark ſilence of Lena, the feeble voices of death were heard.

FINGAL,

(11) It was long the opinion of the ancient Scots, that a ghoſt was heard ſhrieking near the place where a death was to happen ſoon after. The accounts given to this day, among the vulgar, of this extraordinary matter, are very poetical. The ghoſt comes mounted on a meteor, and ſurrounds twice or thrice the place deſtined for the perſon to die; and then goes along the road through which the funeral is to paſs, ſhrieking at intervals; at laſt, the meteor and ghoſt diſappear above the burial place.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT to Book II.

The ghoſt of Crugal, one of the Iriſh heroes who was killed in battle, appearing to Connal foretels the defeat of Cuchullin in the next battle; and earneſtly adviſes him tho make peace with Swaran. Connal communicates the viſion; but Cuchullin is inflexible; from a principle of honour he would not be the firſt to ſue for peace, and he reſolved to continue the war Morning comes; Swaran propoſes diſhonorable terms to Cuchullin, which are rejected. The battle begins, and is obſtinately fought for ſome time, until, upon the flight of Grumal, the whole Iriſh army gave way. Cuchullin and Connal cover their retreat: Carril leads them to a neighbouring hill, whither they are ſoon followed by Cuchullin himſelf, who deſcries the fleet of Fingal making towards the coaſt; but, night coming on, he loſt ſight of it again. Cuchullin, dejected after his defeat, attributes his ill ſucceſs to the death of Ferda his friend, whom he had killed ſome time before. Carril, to ſhew that ill ſucceſs did not always attend thoſe who innocently killed their friends, introduces the epiſode of Comal and Galvina.

FIN.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK II.

CONNAL (1) lay by the ſound of the mountain ſtream, beneath the aged tree. A ſtone, with its moſs, ſupported his head. Shrill thro' the heath

(1) The ſcene of Connal's repoſe is familiar to thoſe who have been in the Highlands of Scotland. The poet removes him to a diſtance from the army, to add more horror to the deſcription of Crugal's ghoſt by the lonelineſs of the place. It perhaps will not be diſagreeable to the reader, to ſee how two other ancient poets handled a ſimilar ſubject.

Ηλθη δ' επι ψυχη Πατροκλῆος δειλοῖο
Παντ' αυτῷ μέγεθος τε καὶ ὄμματα κατ' εἰκυῖα
Και φωνην, &c. HOM. Il. 23.

heath of Lena, he heard the voice of night. At diſtance from the heroes he lay, for the ſon of the ſword feared no foe. My

When lo! the ſhade, before his cloſing eyes,
Of ſad Patroclus roſe or ſeem'd to riſe,
In the ſame robe he living wore, he came
In ſtature, voice, and pleaſing look the ſame.
The form familiar hover'd o'er his head,
And ſleeps Achilles thus? the phantom ſaid.
POPE.

In ſomnis ecce ante oculos mæſtiſſimus Hector
Viſus adeſſe mihi, largoſque effundere fletus,
Raptatus bigis, ut quondam, aterque cruento
Pulvere perque pedes trajectus lora tumentes.
Hei mihi qualis erat! quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore, qui redit exuviis indutus Achilli,
Vel Danaûm Phrygios jaculatus puppibus ignes;
Squalentem barbam & concretos ſanguine crines
Vulneraque illa gerens quæ circum plurima muros
Accepit patrios. Æn. lib. 2.

When Hector's ghoſt before my ſight appears:
A bloody ſhroud he ſeem'd, and bath'd in tears.
Such as he was, when, by Pelides ſlain,
Theſſalian courſers drag'd him o'er the plain.
Swoln were his feet, as when the thongs were thruſt
Through the bor'd holes, his body black with duſt.
Unlike that Hector, who return'd from toils
Of

My hero ſaw in his reſt a dark-red ſtream of fire coming down from the hill. Crugal ſat upon the beam, a chief that lately fell. He fell by the hand of Swaran; ſtriving in the battle of heroes. His face is like the beam of the ſetting moon; his robes are of the clouds of the hill: his eyes are like two decaying flames. Dark is the wound of his breaſt.

Crugal, ſaid the mighty Connal, ſon of Dedgal famed on the hill of deer. Why ſo pale and ſad, thou breaker of the ſhields? Thou haſt never been pale for fear. —— What diſturbs the ſon of the hill?

Dim, and in tears, he ſtood and ſtretched his pale hand over the hero. —— Faintly he raiſed his feeble voice, like the gale of the reedy Lego.

My ghoſt, O Connal, is on my native hills; but my corſe is on the ſands of Ullin. Thou ſhalt never talk with Crugal, or find his lone ſteps in the heath. I am light as the blaſt of Cromla, and I move like the

Of war triumphant, in Æacian ſpoils:
Or him, who made the fainting Greeks retire,
And launch'd againſt their navy Phrygian fire.
His hair and beard ſtood ſtiffen'd with his gore;
And all the wounds he for his country bore.

the ſhadow of miſt. Connal, ſon of Colgar (2), I ſee the dark cloud of death: it hovers over the plains of Lena. The ſons of green Erin ſhall fall. Remove from the field of ghoſts. —— Like the darkened moon (3) he retired, in the midſt of the whiſtling blaſt.

Stay, ſaid the mighty Connal, ſtay my dark-red friend. Lay by that beam of heaven, ſon of the windy Cromla. What cave of the hill is thy lonely houſe? What green-headed hill is the place of thy reſt? Shall we not hear thee in the ſtorm? In the noiſe of the mountain-ſtream? When the feeble ſons of the wind come forth, and ride on the blaſt of the deſart.

The ſoft-voiced Connal roſe in the midſt of his ſounding arms. He ſtruck his ſhield above Cuchullin. The ſon of battle waked.

Why,

(2) Connal the ſon of Caithbat, the friend of Cuchullin, is ſometimes, as here, called the ſon of Colgar; from one of that name who was the founder of his family.

(3) ψυχη δε κατα χθονος, ηυτε καπνος
Ωχετο τετριγυια. Hom. Il. 23. v. 100.
Like a thin ſmoke he ſees the ſpirit fly,
And hears a feeble, lamentable cry. Pope.

Why, ſaid the ruler of the car, comes Connal through he night? My ſpear might turn againſt the ſound? and Cuchullin mourn the death of his friend. Speak, Connal, ſon of Colgar, ſpeak, thy counſel is like the ſon of heaven.

Son of Semo, replied the chief; the ghoſt of Crugal came from the cave of his hill. —— The ſtars dim-twinkled through his form; and his voice was like the ſound of a diſtant ſtream. —— He is a meſſenger of death. —— He ſpeaks of the dark and narrow houſe. Sue for peace, O Chief of Dunſcaich; or fly over the heath of Lena.

He ſpoke to Connal, replied the hero, though ſtars dim-twinkled through his form. Son of Colgar, it was the wind that murmured in the caves of Lena. —— Or if it was the form (4) of Crugal, why

(4) The poet teaches us the opinions that prevailed in his time concerning the ſtate of ſeparate ſouls. From Connal's expreſſion, "That the ſtars dim-twinkled through the form of Crugal," and Cuchullin's reply, we may gather that they both thought the ſoul was material; ſomething like the εἰδωλον of the ancient Greeks.

why didſt thou not force him to my ſight. Haſt thou enquired where is his cave? The houſe of the ſon of the wind? My ſword might find that voice, and force his knowledge from him. And ſmall is his knowledge, Connal, for he was here to day. He could not have gone beyond our hills, and who could tell him there of our death?

Ghoſts fly on clouds and ride on winds, ſaid Connal's voice of wiſdom. They reſt together in their caves, and talk of mortal men.

Then let them talk of mortal men; of every man but Erin's chief. Let me be forgot in their cave; for I will not fly from Swaran. —— If I muſt fall, my tomb ſhall riſe amidſt the fame of future times. The hunter ſhall ſhed a tear on my ſtone; and ſorrow dwell round the high-boſomed Bragéla. I fear not death, but I fear to fly, for Fingal ſaw me often victorious. Thou dim phantom of the hill, ſhew thyſelf to me! come on thy beam of heaven, and ſhew me my death in thine hand; yet will I not fly, thou feeble ſon of the wind. Go, ſon of Colgar, ſtrike the ſhield of Caithbat, it hangs between the ſpears. Let my heroes riſe to the ſound in the midſt of the battles of Erin.

Though

Though Fingal delays his coming with the race of the ſtormy hills; we ſhall fight, O Colgar's ſon, and die in the battle of heroes.

The ſound ſpreads wide; the heroes riſe, like the breaking of a blue-rolling wave. They ſtood on the hea h, like oaks with all their branches round them (5); when they eccho to the ſtream of froſt, and their withered leaves ruſtle to the wind.

High Cromla's head of clouds is gray; the morning trembles on the half-enlightened ocean. The blue, gray miſt ſwims ſlowly by, and hides the ſons of Innis-fail.

Riſe ye, ſaid the king of the dark-brown ſhields, ye that came from Lochlin's waves. The ſons of Erin have fled from our arms —— purſue them over the plains of Lena. —— And, Morla, go to Cormac's hall and bid them yield to Swaran; before the people ſhall fall into the tomb; and the hills of Ullin

(5) —— As when heaven's fire
Hath ſcath'd the foreſt oaks, or mountain pines
With ſinged tops, their ſtately growth tho' bare
Stand on the blaſted heath. MILTON.

Ullin be ſilent. —— They roſe like a flock of ſea-fowl when the waves expel them from the ſhore. Their ſound was like a thouſand ſtreams that meet in Cona's vale, when after a ſtormy night, they turn their dark eddies beneath the pale light of the morning.

As the dark ſhades of autumn fly over the hills of graſs; ſo gloomy, dark, ſucceſſive came the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the ſtag of Morven moved on the king of groves. His ſhining ſhield is on his ſide like a flame on the heath at night, when the world is ſilent and dark, and the traveller ſees ſome ghoſt ſporting in the beam.

A blaſt from the troubled ocean removed the ſettled miſt. The ſons of Innis-fail appear like a ridge of rocks on the ſhore.

Go, Morla, go, ſaid Lochlin's king, and offer peace to theſe. Offer the terms we give to kings when nations bow before us. When the valiant are dead in war, and the virgins weeping on the field.

Great Morla came, the ſon of Swart, and ſtately ſtrode the king of ſhields. He ſpoke to Erin's blue-eyed ſon, among the leſſer heroes.

Take

Take Swaran's peace, the warrior ſpoke, the peace he gives to kings, when the nations bow before him. Leave Ullin's lovely plains to us, and gi e thy ſpouſe and day. Thy ſpouſe high-boſom'd heaving fair. Thy dog that overtakes the wind. Give theſe to prove the weakneſs of thine arm, and live beneath our power.

Tell Swaran, tell that heart of pride, that Cuchullin never yields. —— I give him the dark-blue rolling of ocean, or I give his people graves in Erin! Never ſhall a ſtranger have the lovely ſun-beam of Dunſcaich; nor ever deer fly on Lochlin's hills before the nimble-footed Luäth.

Vain ruler of the car, ſaid Morla, wilt thou fight the king; that king whoſe ſhips of many groves could carry off thine Iſle? So little is thy green-hilled Ullin to the king of ſtormy waves.

In words I yield to many, Morla; but this ſword ſhall yield to none. Erin ſhall own the ſway of Cormac, while Connal and Cuchullin live. O Connal, firſt of mighty men, thou haſt heard the words of Morla; ſhall thy thoughts then be of peace, thou breaker of the ſhields? Spirit of fallen Crugal! why

didſt thou threaten us with death? The narrow houſe ſhall receive me in the midſt of the light of renown. —— Exalt, ye ſons of Innis-fail, exalt the ſpear and bend the bow; ruſh on the foe in darkneſs, as the ſpirits of ſtormy nights.

Then diſmal, roaring, fierce, and deep the gloom of battle rolled along; as miſt (6) that is poured on the valley, when ſtorms invade the ſilent ſun-ſhine of heaven. The chief moves before in arms, like an angry ghoſt before a cloud; when meteors incloſe him with fire; and the dark winds are in his hand. —— Carril, far on the heath, bids the horn of battle ſound. He raiſes the voice of the ſong, and pours his ſoul into the minds of heroes.

Where, ſaid the mouth of the ſong, where is the fallen Crugal? He lies forgot on earth, and the hall of ſhells (7) is ſilent. —— Sad is the ſpouſe of Cru-

(6) —— As evening miſt
Ris'n from a river o'er the mariſh glides
And gathers ground faſt at the lab'rer, heel
Homeward returning. Milton.

(7) The ancient Scots, as well as the preſent highlanders, drunk in ſhells; hence it is that we ſo often meet, in the old poetry, with the *chief of ſhells*, and *the halls of ſhells*.

Crugal, for ſhe is a ſtranger (8) in the hall of her ſorrow. But who is ſhe, that, like a ſun-beam, flies before the ranks of the foe? It is Degrena (9), lovely fair, the ſpouſe of fallen Crugal. Her hair is on the wind behind. Her eye is red; her voice is ſhrill. Green, empty is thy Crugal now, his form is in the cave of the hill. He comes to the ear of reſt, and raiſes his feeble voice; like the humming of the mountain-bee, or collected flies of evening. But Degrena falls like a cloud of the morn; the ſword of Lochlin is in her ſide. Cairbar, ſhe is fallen, the riſing thought of thy youth. She is fallen, O Cairbar, the thought of thy youth-ful hours.

Fierce Cairbar heard the mournful ſound, and ruſhed on like ocean's whale; he ſaw the death of his daughter; and roared in the midſt of thouſands (10). His ſpear met a ſon of Lochlin, and battle ſpread from wing to wing. As a hundred winds in Loch-

(8) Crugal had married Degrona but a little time before the battle, conſequently ſhe may with propriety be called a ſtranger in the hall of her ſorrow.

(9) Deo-ghréna ſignifies a *ſun-beam*.

(10) *Mediiſque in millibus ardet.* VIRG.

Lochlin's groves, as fire in the firs of a hundred hills; ſo loud, ſo ruinous and vaſt the ranks of men are hewn down. —— Cuchullin cut off heroes like thiſtles, and Swaran waſted Erin. Curach fell by his hand, and Cairbar of the boſſy ſhield. Morglan lies in laſting reſt; and Ca-olt quivers as he dies. His white breaſt is ſtained with his blood; and his yellow hair ſtretched in the duſt of his native land. He often had ſpread the feaſt where he fell; and often raiſed the voice of the harp: when his dogs leapt around for joy; and the youths of the chace prepared the bow.

Still Swaran advanced, as a ſtream that burſts from the deſart. The little hills are rolled in its courſe; and the rocks half-ſunk by its ſide. But Cuchullin ſtood before him like a hill (11), that catches the clouds

(11) Virgil and Milton have made uſe of a compariſon ſimilar to this; I ſhall lay both before the reader, and let him judge for himſelf which of theſe two great poets have beſt ſucceeded.

Quantus Athos, aut quantus Eryx, aut ipſe cornſcis,
Cum fremit ilicibus, quantus gaudetque nivali,
Vertice ſe attolens pater Appeninus ad auras.

Like

clouds of heaven- ——— The winds contend on its head of pines; and the hail rattles on its rocks. But, firm in its ſtrength, it ſtands and ſhades the ſilent vale of Cona.

So Cuchullin ſhaded the ſons of Erin, and ſtood in the midſt of thouſands. Blood riſes like the fount of a rock, from panting heroes around him. But Erin falls on either wing like ſnow in the day of the ſun.

O ſons of Innis-fail, ſaid Grumal, Lochlin conquers on the field. Why ſtrive we as reeds againſt the wind? Fly to the hill of dark-brown hinds. He fled like the ſtag of Morven, and his ſpear is a trembling beam of light behind him. Few fled with Gru-

Like Eryx or like Athos great he ſhews
Or father Appenine when white with ſnows;
His head divine obſcure in clouds he hides,
And ſhakes the ſounding foreſt on his ſides.
DRYDEN.

On th' other ſide Satan alarm'd,
Collecting all his might, dilated ſtood
Like Teneriff or Atlas unremov'd:
His ſtature reach'd the ſky. MILTON.

Grumal, the chief of the little ſoul: they fell in the battle of heroes on Lena's echoing heath.

High on his car, of many gems, the chief of Erin ſtood; he ſlew a mighty ſon of Lochlin, and ſpoke, in haſte, to Connal. O Connal, firſt of mortal men, thou haſt taught this arm of death! Though Erin's ſons have fled, ſhall we not fight the foe? O Carril, ſon of other times, carry my living friends to that buſhy hill. —— Here, Connal, let us ſtand like rocks, and ſave our flying friends.

Connal mounts the car of light. They ſtretch their ſhields like the darkened moon, the daughter of the ſtarry ſkies, when ſhe moves, a dun circle, through heaven. Sithfadda panted up the hill, and Duſronnel haughty ſteed. Like waves behind a whale behind them ruſhed the foe.

Now on the riſing ſide of Cromla ſtood Erin's few ſad ſons; like a grove through which the flame had ruſhed hurried on by the winds of the ſtormy night. —— Cuchullin ſtood beſide an oak. He rolled his red eye in ſilence, and heard the wind in his

his bushy hair; when the scout of ocean came, Moran the son of Fithil. —— The ships, he cried, the ships of the lonely isle! There Fingal comes, the first of men, the breaker of the shields. The waves foam before his black prows. His masts with sails are like groves in clouds.

Blow, said Cuchullin, all ye winds that rush over my isle of lovely mist. Come to the death of thousands, O chief of the hills of hinds. Thy sails, my friend, are to me like the clouds of the morning; and thy ships like the light of heaven; and thou thyself like a pillar of fire that giveth light in the night. O Connal, first of men, how pleasant are our friends! But the night is gathering around; where now are the ships of Fingal? Here let us pass the hours of darkness, and wish for the moon of heaven.

The winds came down on the woods. The torrents rushed from the rocks. Rain gathered round the head of Cromla. And the red stars trembled between the flying clouds. Sad, by the side of a stream whose sound was echoed by a tree, sad by the

the ſide of a ſtream the chief of Erin ſat. Connal ſon of Colgar was there, and Carril of other times.

Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin, ſaid the ſon of Semo, unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin ſince he ſlew his friend. —— Ferda, thou ſon of Damman, I loved thee as myſelf.

How, Cuchullin, ſon of Semo, fell the breaker of the ſhields? Well I remember, ſaid Connal, the noble ſon of Damman. Tall and fair he was like the rain-bow of the hill.

Ferda from Albion came, the chief of a hundred hills. In Muri's (12) hall he learned the ſword, and

(12) Muri, ſay the Iriſh bards, was an academy in Ulſter for teaching the uſe of arms. The ſignification of the word is a *cluſter of people*; which renders the opinion probable. Cuchullin is ſaid to have been the firſt who introduced into Ireland complete armour of ſteel. He is famous, among the Senachies, for teaching horſemanſhip to the Iriſh, and for being the firſt who uſed a chariot in that kingdom; which laſt circumſtance was the occaſion of Oſſian's being ſo circumſtantial in his deſcription of Cuchullin's car, in the firſt book.

and won the friendſhip of Cuchullin. We moved to the chace together; and one was our bed in the heath.

Deugala was the ſpouſe of Cairbar, chief of the plains of Ullin. She was covered with the light of beauty, but her heart was the houſe of pride. She loved that ſun-beam of youth, the noble ſon of Damman. Cairbar, ſaid the white-armed woman, give me half of the herd. No more I will remain in your halls. Divide the herd, dark Cairbar.

Let Cuchullin, ſaid Cairbar. divide my herd on the hill. His breaſt is the ſeat of juſtice. Depart, thou light of beauty. —— I went and divided the herd. One ſnow-white bull remained. I gave that bull to Cairbar. The wrath of Deugala roſe.

Son of Damman, begun the fair, Cuchullin pains my ſoul. I muſt hear of his death, or Lubar's ſtream ſhall roll over me. My pale ghoſt ſhall wander near thee, and mourn the wound of my pride. Pour out the blood of Cuchullin or pierce this heaving breaſt.

Deugala, ſaid the fair-haired youth, how ſhall I ſlay the ſon of Semo? He is the friend of my ſecret thoughts, and ſhall I lift the ſword? She wept three days before him, on the fourth he conſented to fight.

I will fight my friend, Deugala! but may I fall by his ſword. Could I wander on the hill and behold the grave of Cuchullin? We fought on the hills of Muri. Our ſwords avoid a wound. They ſlide on the helmets of ſteel; and ſound on the ſlippery ſhields. Deugala was near with a ſmile, and ſaid to the ſon of Damman, thine arm is feeble, thou ſon-beam of youth. Thy years are not ſtrong for ſteel. —— Yield to the ſon of Semo. He is like the rock of Malmor.

The tear is in the eye of youth. He faultering ſaid to me, Cuchullin, raiſe thy boſſy ſhield. Defend thee from the hand of thy friend. My ſoul is laden with grief: for I muſt ſlay the chief of men.

I ſighed as the wind in the chink of a rook. I lifted high the edge of my ſteel. The ſun-

beam

beam of the battle fell; the firſt of Cuchullin's friends. ——

Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin ſince the hero fell.

Mournful is thy tale, ſon of the car, ſaid Carril of other times. It ſends my ſoul back to the ages of old, and to the days of other years. —— Often have I heard of Comal who ſlew the friend he loved; yet victory attended his ſteel; and the battle was conſumed in his preſence.

Comal was a ſon of Albion; the chief of an hundred hills. His deer drunk of a thouſand ſtreams. A thouſand rocks replied to the voice of his dogs. His face was the mildneſs of youth His hand the death of heroes, One was his love, and fair was ſhe! the daughter of mighty Conloch. She appeared like a ſun-beam among women. And her hair was like the wing of the raven. Her dogs were taught to the chace. Her bow-ſtring ſounded on the winds of the foreſt. Her ſoul was fixed on Comal. Often met their eyes of love. Their courſe in the chace was one, and happy were their words

in ſecret. —— But Gormal loved the maid, the dark chief of the gloomy Ardven. He watched her lone ſteps in the heath; the foe of unhappy Comal.

One day, tired of the chace, when the miſt had concealed their friends, Comal and the daughter of Conloch met in the cave of Ronan (1). It was the wonted haunt of Comal. Its ſides were hung with his arms. A hundred ſhields of thongs were there; a hundred helms of ſounding ſteel.

Reſt here, he ſaid, my love Galvina; thou light of the cave of Ronan. A deer appears on Mora's

(1) The unfortunate death of this Ronan is the ſubject of the ninth fragment of ancient poetry publiſhed laſt year; it is not the work of Oſſian, though it is writ in his manner, and bears the genuine marks of antiquity. — The conciſe expreſſions of Oſſian are imitated, but the thoughts are too jejune and confined to be the production of that poet. — Many poems go under his name that have been evidently compoſed ſince his time; they are very numerous in Ireland, and ſome have come to the tranſlator's hands. They are trivial and dull to the laſt degree; ſwelling into ridiculous bombaſt, or ſinking into the loweſt kind of proſaic ſtyle.

Mora's brow. I go; but I will ſoon return. I fear, ſhe ſaid, dark Grumal my foe; he haunts the cave of Ronan. I will reſt among the arms; but ſoon return, my love.

He went to the deer of Mora. The daughter of Conloch would try his love. She cloathed her white ſides with his armour, and ſtrode from the cave of Ronan. He thought it was his foe. His heart beat high. His colour changed, and darkneſs dimmed his eyes. He drew the bow. The arrow flew. Galvina fell in blood. He run with wildneſs in his ſteps and called the daughter of Conloch. No anſwer in the lonely rock. Where art thou, O my love! He ſaw, at length, her heaving heart beating around the feathered dart. O Conloch's daughter, is it thou? He ſunk upon her breaſt.

The hunters found the hapleſs pair; he afterwards walked the hill. But many and ſilent were his ſteps round the dark dwelling of his love. The

fleet of the ocean came. He fought; the ſtrangers fled. He ſearched for his death over the field. But who could kill the mighty Comal! He threw away his dark-brown ſhield. An arrow found his manly breaſt. He ſleps with his loved Galvina at the noiſe of the ſounding ſurge. Their green tombs are ſeen by the mariner, when he bounds on the waves of the north.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT to Book III.

Cuchullin, pleaſed with the ſtory of Carril, inſiſts with that bard for more of his ſongs. He relates the actions of Fingal in Lochlin, and death of Agandecca the beautiful ſiſter of Swaran. He had ſcarce finiſhed when Calmar the ſon of Matha, who had adviſed the firſt battle, came wounded from the field, and told them of Swaran's deſign to ſurpriſe the remains of the Iriſh army. He himſelf propoſes to withſtand ſingly the whole force of the enemy, in a narrow paſs, till the Iriſh ſhould make good their retreat. Cuchullin, touched with the gallant propoſal of Calmar, reſolves to accompany him, and orders Carril to carry off the few that remained of the Iriſh. Morning comes, Calmar dies of his wounds; and, the ſhips of the Caledonians appearing, Swaran gives over the purſuit of the Iriſh, and returns to oppoſe Fingal's landing Cuchullin aſhamed, after his defeat, to appear before Fingal, retires to the cave of Tura. Fingal engages the enemy, puts them to flight;

but

but the coming on of night makes the victory not deciſive. The king, who had obſerved the gallant behaviour of his grandſon Oſcar, gives him advices concerning his conduct in peace and war. He recommends to him to place the example of his fathers before his eyes, as the beſt model for his conduct; which introduces the epiſode concerning Fainaſóllis, the daughter of the king of Craca, whom Fingal had taken under his protection, in his youth. Fillan and Oſcar are diſpatched to obſerve the motions of the enemy by night; Gaul the ſon of Morni deſires the command of the army, in the next battle; which Fingal promiſes to give him. Some general reflections of the poet cloſe the third day.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK III. (1)

PLeaſant are the words of the ſong, ſaid Cuchullin, and lovely are the tales of other times. They are like the calm dew of the morning on the hill of roes, when the ſun is faint on its ſide, and the lake is ſettled and blue in the vale. O Carril, raiſe again thy voice, and let me hear the ſong of Tura: which was ſung in my halls of joy, when Fingal king of ſhields was there, and glowed at the deeds of his fathers. Fingal!

(1) The ſecond night, ſince the opening of the poem, continues; and Cuchullin, Connal, and Carril ſtill ſit in the place deſcribed in the preceding book. The ſtory of Agandecca is introduced here with propriety, as great uſe is made of it in the courſe of the poem, and as it, in ſome meaſure, brings about the cataſtrophe.

Fingal! thou man of battle, ſaid Carril, early were thy deeds in arms. Lochlin was conſumed in thy wrath, when thy youth ſtrove with the beauty of maids. They ſmiled at the fair-blooming face of the hero; but death was in his hand. He was ſtrong as the waters of Lora. His followers were like the roar of a thouſand ſtreams. They took the king of Lochlin in battle, but reſtored him to his ſhips. His big heart ſwelled with pride; and the death of the youth was dark in his ſoul. —— For none ever, but Fingal, overcame the ſtrength of the mighty Starno (2).

He ſat in the halls of his ſhells in Lochlin's woody land. He called the grey-haired Snivan, that often ſung round the circle (3) of Loda: when the ſtone of power heard his cry, and the battle turned in the field of the valiant.

Go;

(2) Starno was the father of Swaran as well as Agandecca. —— His fierce and cruel character is well marked in other poems concerning the times.

(3) This paſſage moſt certainly alludes to the religion of Lochlin, and *the ſtone of power* here mentioned is the image of one of the deities of Scandanavia.

Go; gray-haired Snivan, Starno ſaid, to Ardven's ſea-ſurrounded roks. Tell to Fingal king of the deſart; he that is the faireſt among his thouſands, tell him I give him my daughter, the lovelieſt maid that ever heaved a breaſt of ſnow. Her arms are white as the foam of my waves. Her ſoul is generous and mild. Let him come with his braveſt heroes to the daughter of the ſecret hall.

Snivan came to Albion's windy hills: and fair-haired Fingal went. His kindled ſoul flew before him as he bounded on the waves of the north.

Welcome, ſaid the dark-brown Starno, welcome, king of rocky Morven; and ye his heroes of might; ſons of the lonely iſle! Three days within my halls ſhall ye feaſt; and three days purſue my boars, that your fame may reach the maid that dwells in the ſecret hall.

The king of ſnow (4) deſigned their death, and gave the feaſt of ſhells. Fingal, who doubted the foe,

(4) Starno is here poetically called the king of ſnow, from the great quantities of ſnow that fall in his dominions.

foe, kept on his arms of ſteel. The ſons of death were afraid, and fled from the eyes of the hero. The voice of ſprightly mirth aroſe. The trembling harps of joy are ſtrung. Bards ſing the battle of heroes; or the heaving breaſt of love. —— Ullin, Fingal's bard, was there; the ſweet voice of the hill of Cona. He praiſed the daughter of ſnow; and Morven's (5) high-deſcended chief. —— The daughter of ſnow over-heard, and left the hall of her ſecret ſigh. She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the eaſt. —— Love-lineſs was around her as light. Her ſteps were like the muſic of ſongs. She ſaw the youth and loved him. He was the ſtolen ſigh of her ſoul. Her blue eye rolled on him in ſecret: and ſhe bleſt the chief of Morven.

The third day, with all its beams, ſhone bright on the wood of boars. Forth moved the dark-browed Starno; and Fingal, king of ſhields. Half the day they

(5) All the North-weſt coaſt of Scotland probably went of old under the name of Morven, which ſignifies a ridge of very high hills.

they ſpent in the chace; and the ſpear of Fingal was red in the blood of Gormal (6).

It was then the daughter of Starno, with blue eyes rolling in tears, came with her voice of love and ſpoke to the king of Morven.

Fingal, high-deſcended chief, truſt not Starno's heart of pride. Within that wood he has placed his chiefs; beware of the wood of death. But, remember, ſon of the hill, remember Agandecca: ſave me from the wrath of my father, king of the windy Morven!

The youth, with unconcern, went on; his heroes by his ſide. The ſons of death fell by his hand; and Gormal echoed around.

Before the halls of Starno the ſons of the chace convened. The king's dark brows were like clouds. His eyes like meteors of night. Bring hither, he cries, Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven. His hand is ſtained with the blood of my people; and her words have not been in vain. ——

She

(6) Gormal is the name of a hill in Lochlin, in the neighbour-hood of Starno's palace.

She came with the red eye of tears. She came with her looſe raven locks. Her white breaſt heaved with ſighs, like the foam of the ſtreamy Lubar. Starno pierced her ſide with ſteel. She fell like a wreath of ſnow that ſlides from the rocks of Ronan; when the woods are ſtill, and the echo deepens in the vale.

Then Fingal eyed his valiant chiefs, his valiant chiefs took arms. The gloom of the battle roared, and Lochlin fled or died. —— Pale, in his bounding ſhip he cloſed the maid of the raven hair. Her tomb aſcends on Ardven, and the ſea roars round the dark dwelling of Agandecca.

Bleſſed be her ſoul, ſaid Cuchullin, and bleſſed be the mouth of the ſong. —— Strong was the youth of Fingal, and ſtrong in his arm of age. Lochlin ſhall fall again before the king of echoing Morven. Shew thy face from a cloud, O moon; light his white ſails on the wave of the night. And if any ſtrong ſpirit (7) of heaven ſits on that low-hung

(7) This is the only paſſage in the poem that has the appearance of religion. — But Cuchullin's apoſtrophe

hung cloud; turn his dark ſhips from the rock, thou rider of the ſtorm!

Such were the words of Cuchullin at the ſound of the mountain-ſtream, when Calmar aſcended the hill, the wounded ſon of Matha. From the field he came in his blood. He leaned on his bending ſpear. Feeble is the arm of battle! but ſtrong the ſoul of the hero!

Welcome! O ſon of Matha, ſaid Connal, welcome art thou to thy friends! Why burſts that broken ſigh from the breaſt of him that never feared before?

And never, Connal, will he fear, chief of the pointed ſteel. My ſoul brightens in danger, and exults in the noiſe of battle. I am of the race of ſteel; my fathers never feared.

Cormar

ſtrophe to this ſpirit is accompanied with a doubt; ſo that it is not eaſy to determine whether the hero meant a ſuperior being, or the ghoſts of deceaſed warriors, who were ſuppoſed in thoſe times to rule the ſtorms, and to tranſport themſelves in a guſt of wind from one country to another.

Cormar was the firſt of my race. He ſported through the ſtorms of the waves. His black ſkiff bounded on ocean, and travelled on the wings of the blaſt. A ſpirit once embroiled the night. Seas ſwell and rocks reſound. Winds drive along the clouds. The lightning flies on wings of fire. He feared and came to land: then bluſhed that he feared at all. He ruſhed again among the waves to find the ſon of the wind. Three youths guide the bounding bark; he ſtood with the ſword unſheathed. When the low-hung vapour paſſed, he took it by the curling head, and ſearched its dark womb with his ſteel. The ſon of the wind forſook the air. The moon and ſtars returned.

Such was the boldneſs of my race; and Calmar is like his fathers. Danger flies from the uplifted ſword. They beſt ſucceed who dare.

But now, ye ſons of green-vallyed Erin, retire from Lena's bloody heath. Collect the ſad remnant of our friends, and join the ſword of Fingal. I heard the ſound of Lochlin's advancing arms; but Calmar will remain and fight. My voice ſhall be ſuch, my friends, as if thouſands were behind me.

But, ſon of Semo, remember me. Remember Calmar's lifeleſs corſe. After Fingal has waſted the field, place me by ſome ſtone of remembrance, that future times may hear my fame; and the mother (8) of Calmar rejoice over the ſtone of my renown.

No: ſon of Matha, ſaid Cuchullin, I will never leave thee. My joy is in the unequal field: my ſoul increaſes in danger. Connal, and Carril of other times, carry of the ſad ſons of Erin; and when the battle is over, ſearch for our pale corſes in this narrow way. For near this oak we ſhall ſtand in the ſtream of the battle of thouſands. —— O Fithil's ſon, with feet of wind, fly over the heath of Lena. Tell to Fingal that Erin is inthralled, and bid the king of Morven haſten. O let him come like the ſun in a ſtorm, when he ſhines on the hills of graſs.

Morning is gray on Cromla; the ſons of the ſea aſcend. Calmar ſtood forth to meet them in the pride of his kindling ſoul. But pale was the face of the warrior; he leaned on his father's ſpear. That ſpear

(8) Alclétha, her lamentation over her ſon is introduced in the poem concerning the death of Cuchullin, printed in this collection.

ſpear which he brought from Lara's hall, when the ſoul of his mother was ſad. —— But ſlowly now the hero falls like a tree on the plains of Cona. Dark Cuchullin ſtands alone like a rock (9) in a ſandy vale. The ſea comes with its waves, and roars on its hardened ſides. Its head is covered with foam, and the hills are echoing around. —— Now from the gray miſt of the ocean, the white-ſailed ſhips of Fingal appear. High is the grove of their maſts as they nod, by turns, on the rolling wave.

Swaran ſaw them from the hill, and returned from the ſons of Erin. As ebbs the reſounding ſea through the hundred Iſles of Iniſtore; ſo loud, ſo vaſt, ſo immenſe returned the ſons of Lochlin againſt the king of the deſert hill. But bending, weeping, ſad, and ſlow, and dragging his long ſpear behind, Cuchul-

(9) —— — ἠΰτε πέτρη
Ηλίβατος, μεγάλη, ϖολιῆς ἁλὸς ἐγγὺς ἐοῦσα,
&c. Hom. Il. 15.
So ſome tall rock o'erhangs the hoary main,
By winds aſſail'd, by billows beat in vain,
Unmov'd it hears, above, the tempeſts blow,
And ſees the watry mountains break below.
Pope.

Cuchullin ſunk in Cromla's wood, and mourned his fallen friends. He feared the face of Fingal, who was wont to greet him from the fields of renown.

How many lie there of my heroes! the chiefs of Innis-fail! they that were chearful in the hall when the ſound of the ſhells aroſe. No more ſhall I find their ſteps in the heath, or hear their voice in the chace of the hinds. Pale, ſilent, low on bloody beds are they who were my friends! O ſpirits of the lately-dead, meet Cuchullin on his heath. Converſe with him on the wind, when the ruſtling tree of Tura's cave reſounds. There, far remote, I ſhall lie unknown. No bard ſhall hear of me. No gray ſtone ſhall riſe to my renown. Mourn me with the death, O Bragela! departed is my fame.

Such were the words of Cuchullin when he ſunk in the woods of Cromla.

Fingal, tall in his ſhip, ſtretched his bright lance before him. Terrible was the gleam of the ſteel: it was like the green meteor of death, ſetting in the heath of Malmor, when the traveller is alone, and the broad moon is darkened in heaven.

The battle is over, ſaid the king, and I behold the blood of my friends. Sad is the heath of Lena; and mournful the oaks of Cromla: the hunters have fallen there in their ſtrength; and the ſon of Semo is no more. —— Ryno and Fillan, my ſons, ſound the horn of Fingal's war. Aſcend that hill on the ſhore, and call the children of the foe. Call them from the grave of Lamdarg, the chief of other times. —— Be your voice like that of your father, when he enters the battles of his ſtrength. I wait for the dark mighty man; I wait on Lena's ſhore for Swaran. And let him come with all his race; for ſtrong in battle are the friends of the dead.

Fair Ryno flew like lightning; dark Fillan as the ſhade of autumn. On Lena's heath their voice is heard; the ſons of ocean heard the horn of Fingal's war. As the roaring eddy of ocean returning from the kingdom of ſnows; ſo ſtrong, ſo dark, ſo ſudden came down the ſons of Lochlin. The king in their front appears in the diſmal pride of his arms. Wrath burns in his dark-brown face; and his eyes roll in the fire of his valour.

Fingal beheld the ſon of Starno; and he remembered Agandecca. —— For Swaran with the tears of youth had mourned his white-boſomed ſiſter. He ſent Ullin of the ſongs to bid him to the feaſt of ſhells. For pleaſant on Fingal's ſoul returned the remembrance of the firſt of his loves.

Ullin came with aged ſteps, and ſpoke to Starno's ſon. O thou that dwelleſt afar, ſurrounded, like a rock, with thy waves, come to the feaſt of the king, and paſs the day in reſt. To-morrow let us fight, O Swaran, and break the echoing ſhields.

To-day, ſaid Starno's wrathful ſon, we break the echoing ſhields: to-morrow my feaſt will be ſpread; and Fingal lie on earth.

And to-morrow let his feaſt be ſpread, ſaid Fingal with a ſmile; for to-day, O my ſons, we ſhall break the echoing ſhields. —— Oſſian, ſtand thou near my arm. Gaul, lift thy terrible ſword. Fergus, bend thy crooked yew. Throw, Fillan, thy lance through heaven. —— Lift your ſhields like the darkened moon. Be your ſpears the meteors of death. Follow me in the path of my fame; and equal my deeds in battle.

As

As a hundred winds on Morven; as the ſtreams of a hundred hills; as clouds fly ſucceſſive over heaven; or, as the dark ocean aſſaults the ſhore of the deſert: ſo roaring, ſo vaſt, ſo terrible the armies mixed on Lena's echoing heath. —— The groan of the people ſpread over the hills; it was like the thunder of night, when the cloud burſts on Cona and a thouſand ghoſts ſhriek at once on the hollow wind.

Fingal ruſhed on in his ſtrength, terrible as the ſpirit of Trenmor; when, in a whirlwind, he comes to Morven to ſee the children of his pride. The oaks reſound on their hills, and the rocks fall down before him. —— Bloody was the hand of my father when he whirled the lightning of his ſword. He remembers the battles of his youth, and the field is waſted in his courſe.

Ryno went on like a pillar of fire. —— Dark is the brow of Gaul. Fergus ruſhed forward with feet of wind; and Fillan like the miſt of the hill. Myſelf (10), like a rock, came down, I exulted in

(10) Here the poet celebrates his own actions, but he does it in ſuch a manner that we are not

in the ſtrength of the king. Many were the deaths of my arm; and diſmal was the gleam of my ſword. My locks were not then ſo gray; nor trembled my hands of age. My eyes were not cloſed in darkneſs; nor failed my feet in the race.

Who can relate the deaths of the people; or the deeds of mighty heroes; when Fingal, burning in his wrath, conſumed the ſons of Lochlin? Groans ſwelled on groans from hill to hill, till night had covered all. Pale; ſtaring like a herd of deer, the ſons of Lochlin convene on Lena.

We ſad and heard the ſprightly harp at Lubar's gentle ſtream. Fingal himſelf was next to the foe; and liſtened to the tales of bards. His godlike race were in the ſong, the chiefs of other times. Attentive, leaning on his ſhield, the king of Morven ſat. The wind whiſtled through his aged locks, and his thoughts are of the days of other years. Near him on his bending ſpear, my young, my lovely

diſpleaſed. The mention of the great actions of his youth immediately ſuggeſts to him the helpleſs ſituation of his age. We do not deſpiſe him for ſelfiſh praiſe, but feel his misfortunes.

lovely Oſcar ſtood. He admired the king of Morven: and his actions were ſwelling in his ſoul.

Son of my ſon, begun the king, O Oſcar, pride of youth, I ſaw the ſhining of thy ſword and gloried in my race. Purſue the glory of our fathers, and be what they have been; when Trenmor lived, the firſt of men, and Trathal the father of heroes. They fought the battle in their youth, and are the ſong of bards. —— O Oſcar! bend the ſtrong in arms: but ſpare the feeble hand. Be thou a ſtream of many tides againſt the foes of thy people; but like the gale that moves the graſs to thoſe who aſk thine aid. —— So Trenmor lived; ſuch Trathal was; and ſuch has Fingal been. My arm was the ſupport of the injured; and the weak reſted behind the lightning of my ſteel.

Oſcar! I was young like thee, when lovely Fainaſóllis came: that ſun-beam! that mild light of love! the daughter of Craca's (11) king! I then returned

(11) What the Craca here mentioned was, is not, at this diſtance of time, eaſy to determine. The moſt probable opinion is, that it was one of the

turned from Cona's heath, and few were in my train. A white-ſailed boat appeared far off; we ſaw it like a miſt that rode on ocean's blaſt. It ſoon approached; we ſaw the fair. Her white breaſt heaved with ſighs. The wind was in her looſe dark hair; her roſy cheek had tears. —— Daughter of beauty, calm I ſaid, what ſigh is in that breaſt? Can I, young as I am, defend thee, daughter of the ſea? My ſword is not unmatched in war, but dauntleſs is my heart.

To thee I fly, with ſighs ſhe replied, O Chief of mighty men! To thee I fly, chief of ſhells, ſupporter of the feeble hand! The king of Craca's echoing iſle owned me the ſun-beam of his race. And often did the hills of Cromala reply to the ſighs of love for the unhappy Fainaſóllis. Sora's chief beheld me fair; and loved the daughter of Craca. His ſword is like a beam of light upon the warrior's ſide. But dark is his brow; and tempeſts are in his ſoul. I ſhun him on the rolling ſea; but Sora's chief purſues.

Reſt

Shetland iſles. — There is a ſtory concerning a daughter of the king of Craca in the ſixth book.

Reſt thou, I ſaid, behind my ſhield; reſt in peace, thou beam of light! The gloomy chief of Sora will fly, if Fingal's arm is like his ſoul. In ſome lone cave I might conceal thee, daughter of the ſea! But Fingal never flies; for where the danger threatens, I rejoice in the ſtorm of ſpears. — I ſaw the tears upon her cheek. I pitied Craca's fair.

Now, like a dreadful wave afar, appeared the ſhip of ſtormy Borbar. His maſts high-bended over the ſea behind their ſheets of ſnow. White roll the waters on either ſide. The ſtrength of ocean ſounds. Come thou, I ſaid, from the roar of ocean, thou rider of the ſtorm. Partake the feaſt within my hall. It is the houſe of ſtrangers. —— The maid ſtood trembling by my ſide; he drew the bow: ſhe fell. Unerring is thy hand, I ſaid, but feeble was the foe. —— We fought, nor weak was the ſtrife of death: He ſunk beneath my ſword. We laid them in two tombs of ſtones; the unhappy children of youth.

Such have I been in my youth, O Oſcar; be thou like the age of Fingal. Never ſeek the battle, nor

nor ſhun it when it comes. —— Fillan and Oſcar of the dark-brown hair; ye children of the race; fly over the heath of roaring winds; and view the ſons of Lochlin. Far off I hear the noiſe of their fear, like the ſtorms of echoing Cona. Go: that they may not fly my ſword along the waves of the north. —— For many chiefs of Erin's race lie here on the dark bed of death. The children of the ſtorm are low; the ſons of echoing Cromla.

The heroes flew like two dark clouds; two dark clouds that are the chariots of ghoſts; when air's dark children come to frighten hapleſs men.

It was then that Gaul (12), the ſon of Morni, ſtood like a rock in the night. His ſpear is glittering

(12) Gaul, the ſon of Morni, was chief of a tribe that diſputed long, the pre-eminence, with Fingal himſelf. They were reduced at laſt to obedience, and Gaul, from an enemy, turned Fingal's beſt friend and greateſt hero. His character is ſomething like that of Ajax in the Iliad; a hero of more ſtrength than conduct in battle. He was very fond of military fame, and here he demands the next battle to himſelf. — The poet, by an artifice, removes Fingal, that his return may be the more magnificent.

ring to the ſtars; his voice like many ſtreams.——Son of battle, cried the chief, O Fingal, king of ſhells! let the bards of many ſongs ſooth Erin's friends to reſt. And, Fingal, ſheath thy ſword of death; and let thy people fight. We wither away without our fame; for our king is the only breaker of ſhields. When morning riſes on our hills, behold at a diſtance our deeds. Let Lochlin feel the ſword of Morni's ſon, that bards may ſing of me. Such was the cuſtom heretofore of Fingal's noble race. Such was thine own, thou king of ſwords, in battles of the ſpear.

O ſon of Morni, Fingal replied, I glory in thy fame.—— Fight; but my ſpear ſhall be near to aid thee in the midſt of danger. Raiſe, raiſe the voice, ſons of the ſong, and lull me into reſt. Here will Fingal lie amidſt the wind of night.—— And if thou, Agandecca, art near, among the children of thy land; if thou ſitteſt on a blaſt of wind among the high-ſhrowded maſts of Lochlin; come to my dreams (1), my fair one, and ſhew thy bright face to my ſoul.

Many

(1) The poet prepares us for the dream of Fingal in the next book.

Many a voice and many a harp in tuneful ſounds aroſe. Of Fingal's noble deeds they ſung, and of the noble race of the hero. And ſometimes on the lovely ſound was heard the name of the now mournful Oſſian.

Often have I fought, and often won in battles of the ſpear. But blind, and tearful; and forlorn I now walk with little men. O Fingal, with thy race of battle I now behold thee not. The wild roes feed upon the green tomb of the mighty king of Morven. —— Bleſt be thy ſoul, thou king of ſwords, thou moſt renowned on the hills of Cona!

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT to Book IV.

The action of the poem being ſuſpended by night, Oſſian takes that opportunity to relate his own actions at the lake of Lego, and his courtſhip of Evirallin, who was the mother of Oſcar, and had died ſome time before the expedition of Fingal into Ireland. Her ghoſt appears to him, and tells him that Oſcar, who had been ſent, the beginning of the night, to obſerve the enemy, was engaged with an advanced party, and almoſt overpowered. Oſſian relieves his ſon; and an alarm is given to Fingal of the approach of Swaran. The king riſes, calls his army together, and, as he had promiſed the preceding night, devolves the command on Gaul the ſon of Morni, while he himſelf, after charging his ſons to behave gallantly and defend his people, retires to a hill, from whence he could have a view of the battle. The battle joins; the poet relates Oſcar's great actions. But when Oſcar, in conjunction with his father, conquered in one wing, Gaul who was attacked by Swaran

in perſon, was on the point of retreatin the other. Fingal ſends Ullin his bard to encourage him with a war-ſong, but notwithſtanding Swaran prevails; and Gaul and his army are obliged to give way Fingal, deſcending from the hill, rallies them again: Swaran deſiſts from the purſuit, poſſeſſes himſelf of a riſing ground, reſtores the ranks, and waits the approach of Fingal. The king, having encouraged his men, gives the neceſſary orders, and renews the battle. Cuchullin, who, with his friend Connal, and Carril his bard, had retired to the cave of Tura, hearing the noiſe, came to the brow of the hill, which overlooked the field of battle, where he ſaw Fingal engaged with the enemy. He, being hindered by Connal from joining Fingal, who was himſelf upon the point of obtainig a complete victory, ſends Carril to congratulate that hero on his ſucceſs.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK IV. (1)

Who comes with her ſongs from the mountain, like the bow of the ſhowery Lena? It is the maid of the voice of love. The white-armed daughter of Toſcar. Often haſt thou heard my

(1) Fingal being aſleep, and the action ſuſpended by night, the poet introduces the ſtory of his courtſhip of Evirallin the daughter of Branno. The epiſode is neceſſary to clear up ſeveral paſſages that follow in the poem; at the ſame time that it naturally brings on the action of the book which, may be ſuppoſed to begin about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. —— This book, as many of Oſſian's other

my ſong, and given the tear of beauty. Doſt thou come to the battles of thy people, and to hear the actions of Oſcar? When ſhall I ceaſe to mourn by the ſtreams of the echoing Cona? My years have paſſed away in battle, and my age is darkened with ſorrow.

Daughter of the hand of ſnow! I was not ſo mournful and blind; I was not ſo dark and forlorn when Everallin loved me. Everallin with the dark-brown hair, the white-boſomed love of Cormac. A thouſand heroes ſought the maid, ſhe denied her love to a thouſand; the ſons of the ſword were deſpiſed; for graceful in her eyes was Oſſian.

I went in ſuit of the maid to Lego's ſable ſurge; twelve of my people were there, the ſons of the ſtreamy Morven. We came to Branno friend of ſtrangers: Branno of the ſounding mail. ——— From whence, he ſaid, are the arms of ſteel? Not eaſy to win is the maid that has denied the blue-eyed

other compoſitions, is addreſſed to the beautiful Malvina the daughter of Toſcar. She appears to have been in love with Oſcar, and to have affected the company of the father after the death of the ſon.

eyed ſons of Erin. But bleſt be thou, O ſon of Fingal, happy is the maid that waits thee. Tho' twelve daughters of beauty were mine, thine were the choice, thou ſon of fame! —— Then he opened the hall of the maid, the dark-haired Everallin. Joy kindled in our breaſts of ſteel and bleſt the maid of Branno.

Above us on the hill appeared the people of ſtately Cormac. Eight were the heroes of the chief; and the heath flamed with their arms. There Colla, Durra of the wounds, there mighty Toſcar, and Tago, there Freſtal the victorious ſtood; Dairo of the happy deeds, and Dala the battle's bulwark in the hand of Cormac, and grace-ful was the look of the hero.

Eight were the heroes of Oſſian; Ullin ſtormy ſon of war; Mullo of the generous deeds; the noble, the graceful Scelacha; Oglan, and Cerdal the wrathful, and Duma-riccan's brows of death. And why ſhould Ogar be the laſt; ſo wide renowned on the hills of Ardven?

Ogar

Ogar met Dala the ſtrong, face to face, on the field of heroes. The battle of the chiefs was like the wind on ocean's foamy waves. The dagger is remembered by Ogar; the weapon which he loved; nine times he drowned it in Dala's ſide. The ſtormy battle turned. Three times I pierced Cormac's ſhield: three times he broke his ſpear. But, unhappy youth of love! I cut his head away. —— Five times I ſhook it by the lock. The friends of Cormac fled.

Whoever would have told me, lovely maid (2), when then I ſtrove in battle; that blind, forſaken, and forlorn I now ſhould paſs the night; firm ought his mail to have been, and unmatched his arm in battle.

Now (3) on Lena's gloomy heath the voice of muſic died away. The unconſtant blaſt blew hard, and

(2) The poet addreſſes himſelf to Malvina the daughter of Toſcar.

(3) The poet returns to his ſubject. If one could fix the time of the year in which the action of the poem happened, from the ſcene deſcribed here, I ſhould be tempted to place it in autumn. —— The trees ſhed their leaves, and the winds are

and the high oak ſhook its leaves around me; of Everallin were my thoughts, when ſhe, in all the light of beauty, and her blue eyes rolling in tears, ſtood on a cloud before my ſight, and ſpoke with feeble voice.

O Oſſian, riſe and ſave my ſon; ſave Oſcar chief of men, near the red oak of Lubar's ſtream, he fights with Lochlin's ſons. —— She ſunk into her cloud again. I clothed me with my ſteel. My ſpear ſupported my ſteps, and my rattling armour rung. I hummed, as I was wont in danger, the ſongs of heroes of old. Like diſtant thunder (4) Lochlin heard; they fled; my ſon purſued.

I cal-

variable, both which circumſtances agree with that ſeaſon of the year.

(4) Oſſian gives the reader a high idea of himſelf. His very ſong frightens the enemy. This paſſage reſembles one in the eighteenth Iliad, where the voice of Achilles frightens the Trojans from the body of Patroclus.

Forth march'd the chief, and diſtant from the crowd
High on the rampart rais'd his voice aloud.
So high his breazen voice the hero rear'd,
Hoſts drop their arms and trembled as they fear'd. Pope.

I called him like a diſtant ſtream. My ſon return over Lena. No further purſue the foe, though Oſſian is behind thee. —— He came; and lovely in my ear was Oſcar's ſounding ſteel. Why didſt thou ſtop my hand, he ſaid, till death had covered all? For dark and dreadful by the ſtream they met thy ſon and Fillan. They watched the terrors of the night. Our ſwords have conquered ſome. But as the winds of night pour the ocean over the white ſands of Mora, ſo dark advance the ſons of Lochlin over Lena's ruſtling heath. The ghoſts of night ſhriek afar; and I have ſeen the meteors of death. Let me awake the king of Morven. he that ſmiles in danger; for he is like the ſon of heaven that riſes in a ſtorm.

Fingal had ſtarted from a dream, and leaned on Trenmor's ſhield; the dark-brown ſhield of his fathers; which they had lifted of old in the battles of their race. —— The hero had ſeen in his reſt the mournful form of Agandecca; ſhe came from the way of the ocean, and ſlowly, lonely, moved over Lena. Her face was pale like the miſt of Cromla; and dark were the tears of her

cheek. She often raiſed her dim hand from her robe; her robe which was of the clouds of the deſart: ſhe raiſed her dim hand over Fingal, and turned away her ſilent eyes.

Why weeps the daughter of Starno, ſaid Fingal, with a ſigh? Why is thy face ſo pale, thou daughter of the clouds? —— She departed on the wind of Lena; and left him in the midſt of the night. —— She mourned the ſons of her people that were to fall by Fingal's hand.

The hero ſtarted from reſt, and ſtill beheld her in his ſoul. —— The ſound of Oſcar's ſteps approached. The king ſaw the grey ſhield on his ſide. For the faint beam of the morning came over the waters of Ullin.

What do the foes in their fear? ſaid the riſing king of Morven. Or fly they through ocean's foam, or wait they the battle of ſteel? But why ſhould Fingal aſk? I hear their voice on the early wind.--- Fly over Lena's heath, O Oſcar, and awake our friends to battle.

The king ſtood by the ſtone of Lubar; and thrice raiſed his terrible voice. The deer ſtarted from

from the fountains of Cromla; and all the rocks ſhook on their hills. Like the noiſe of a hundred mountain-ſtreams, that burſt, and roar, and foam: like the clouds that gather to a tempeſt on the blue face of the ſky; ſo met the ſons of the deſart, round the terrible voice of Fingal. For pleaſant was the voice of the king of Morven to the warriors of his land: often had he led them to battle, and returned with the ſpoils of the foe.

Come to battle, ſaid the king, ye children of the ſtorm. Come to the death of thouſands. Comhal's ſon will ſee the fight. —— My ſword ſhall wave on that hill, and be the ſhield of my people. But never may you need it, warriors; while the ſon of Morni fights, the chief of mighty men. —— He ſhall lead my battle; that his fame may riſe in the ſong. —— O ye ghoſts of heroes dead! ye riders of the ſtorm of Cromla! receive my falling people with joy, and bring them to your hills. - - - And may the blaſt of Lora carry them over my ſeas, that they may come to my ſilent dreams, and delight my ſoul in reſt.

Fillan and Oſcar, of the dark-brown hair! fair Ryno, with the pointed ſteel! advance with valour to the fight; and behold the ſon of Morni. Let your ſwords be like his in the ſtrife: and behold the deeds of his hands, Protect the friends of your father: and remember the chiefs of old. My children, I ſhall ſee you yet, though here ye ſhould fall in Erin. Soon ſhall our cold, pale ghoſts meet in a cloud, and fly over the hills of Cona.

Now like a dark and ſtormy cloud, edged round with the red lightning of heaven, and flying weſtward from the morning's beam, the king of hills removed. Terrible is the light of his armour, and two ſpears are in his hand. —— His gray hair falls on the wind. —— He often looks back on the war. Three bards attend the ſon of fame, to carry his words to the heroes. - - - High on Cromla's ſide he ſat, waving the lightning of his ſword, and as he waved we moved.

Joy roſe in Oſcar's face. His cheek is red. His eye ſheds tears. The ſword is a beam of fire in his hand. He came, and ſmiling, ſpoke to Oſſian.——

O ru-

O ruler of the fight of ſteel! my father, hear thy ſon. Retire with Morven's mighty chief; and give me Oſſian's fame. And if here I fall; my king, remember that breaſt of ſnow, that lonely ſun-beam of my love, the white-handed daughter of Toſcar. For with red cheek from the rock, and bending over the ſtream, her ſoft hair flies about her boſom as ſhe pours the ſigh for Oſcar. Tell her I am on my hills a lightly-bounding ſon of the wind; that hereafter, in a cloud, I may meet the lovely maid of Toſcar.

Raiſe, Oſcar, rather raiſe my tomb. I will not yield the fight to thee. For firſt and bloodieſt in the war my arm ſhall teach thee how to fight. But, remember, my ſon, to place this ſword, this bow, and the horn of my deer, within that dark and narrow houſe, whoſe mark is one gray ſtone. Oſcar, I have no love to leave to the care of my ſon; for graceful Evirallin is no more, the lovely daughter of Branno.

Such were our words, when Gaul's loud voice came growing on the wind. He waved on high the ſword of his father, and ruſhed to death and wounds.

As wa-

As waves white-bubbling over the deep come ſwelling, roaring on; as rocks of ooze met roaring waves: ſo foes attacked and fought. Man met with man, and ſteel with ſteel. Shields ſound; men fall. As a hundred hammers on the ſon of the furnace, ſo roſe, ſo rung their ſwords.

Gaul ruſhed on like a whirlwind in Ardven. The deſtruction of heroes is on his ſword. Swaran was like the fire of the deſart in the echoing heath of Gormal. How can I give to the ſong the death of many ſpears? My ſword roſe high, and flamed in the ſtrife of blood. And, Oſcar, terrible wert thou, my beſt, my greateſt ſon! I rejoiced in my ſecret ſoul, when his ſword flamed over the ſlain. They fled amain through Lena's heath: and we purſued and ſlew. As ſtones that bound from rock to rock; as axes in echoing woods; as thunder rolls from hill to hill in diſmal broken peals; ſo blow ſucceeded to blow, and death to death, from the hand of Oſcar (5) and mine.

But

(5) Oſſian never fails to give a fine character of his beloved ſon. His ſpeech to his father is that of a hero; it contains the ſubmiſſion due to a parent, and

But Swaran cloſed round Morni's ſon, as the ſtrength of the tide of Iniſtore. The king half-roſe from his hill at the ſight, and half-aſſumed the ſpear. Go, Ullin, go, my aged bard, begun the king of Morven. Remind the mighty Gaul of battle; remind him of his fathers. Support the yielding fight with ſong; for ſong enlivens war. Tall Ullin went, with ſteps of age, and ſpoke to the king of ſwords.

Son (6) of the chief of generous ſteeds! high-bounding king of ſpears. Strong arm in every perilous

and the warmth that becomes a young warrior. There is a propriety in dwelling here on the actions of Oſcar, as the beautiful Malvina, to whom the book is addreſſed, was in love with that hero.

(6) The war-ſong of Ullin varies from the reſt of the poem in the verſification. It runs down like a torrent; and conſiſts almoſt intirely of epithets. The cuſtom of encouraging men in battle with extempore rhymes, has been carried down almoſt to our own times. Several of theſe war-ſongs are extant, but the moſt of them are only a group of epithets, without beauty or harmony, utterly deſtitute of poetical merit.

rious toil. Hard heart that never yields. Chief of the pointed arms of death. Cut down the foe; let no white ſail bound round dark Iniſtore. Be thine arm like thunder. Thine eyes like fire, thy heart of ſolid rock. Whirl round thy ſword as a meteor at night, and lift thy ſhield like the flame of death. Son of the chief of generous ſteeds, cut down the foe; deſtroy. —— The hero's heart beat high. But Swaran came with battle. He cleft the ſhield of Gaul in twain; and the ſons of the deſart fled.

Now Fingal aroſe in his might, and thrice he reared his voice. Cromla anſwered around, and the ſons of the deſart ſtood ſtill. —— They bent their red faces to earth, aſhamed at the preſence of Fingal. He came like a cloud of rain in the days of the ſun, when ſlow it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the ſhower. Swaran beheld the terrible king of Morven, and ſtopped in the midſt of his courſe. Dark he leaned on his ſpear, rolling his red eyes around. Silent and tall he ſeemed as an oak on the banks of Lubar, which had its branches blaſted of old by the lightning of heaven. It bends over the ſtream, and the gray moſs whiſtles in the wind: ſo ſtood the king. Then ſlowly

he

he retired to the riſing heath of Lena. His thouſands pour around the hero, and the darkneſs of battle gathers on the hill.

Fingal, like a beam from heaven, ſhone in the midſt of his people. His heroes gather around him, and he ſends forth the voice of his power. Raiſe my ſtandards (7) on high, --- ſpread them on Lena's wind, like the flames of an hundred hills. Let them ſound on the winds of Erin, and remind us of the fight. Ye ſons of the roaring ſtreams, that pour from a thouſand hills. be near the king of Morven: attend to the words of his power. Gaul ſtrongeſt arm of death! O Oſcar, of the future fights; Connal, ſon of the blue ſteel of Sora; Dermid of the dark-brown hair, and Oſſian king of many ſongs, be near your father's arm.

We reared the ſun-beam (8) of battle; the ſtandard of the king. Each hero's ſoul exulted with joy.

(7) Th' imperial enſign, which full high advanc'd,
Shone like a meteor ſtreaming to the wind.
MILTON,

(8) Fingal's ſtandard was diſtinguiſhed by the name of *ſun-beam*; probably on account of its bright colour,

joy, as, waving, it flew on the wind. It was ſtudded with gold above, as the blue wide ſhell of the nightly ſky. Each hero had his ſtandard too; and each his gloomy men.

Behold, ſaid the king of generous ſhells, how Lochlin divides on Lena. —— They ſtand like broken clouds on the hill, or an half conſumed grove of oaks; when we ſee the ſky through its branches, and the meteor paſſing behind. Let every chief among the friends of Fingal take a dark troop of thoſe that frown ſo high; nor let a ſon of the echoing groves bound on the waves of Iniſtore.

Mine, ſaid Gaul, be the ſeven chiefs that came from Lano's lake. —— Let Iniſtore's dark king, ſaid Oſcar, come to the ſword of Oſſian's ſon. — To mine the king of Iniſcon, ſaid Connal, heart of ſteel! Or Mudan's chief or I, ſaid brown-haired Dermid, ſhall ſleep on clay-cold earth. My choice, though now ſo weak and dark, was Termann's battling king; I promiſed with my hand to win

colour, and its being ſtudded with gold. To begin a battle is expreſſed, in old compoſition, by *lifting of the ſun-beam*.

win the hero's dark-brown ſhield. —— Bleſt and victorious be my chiefs, ſaid Fingal of the mildeſt look; Swaran, king of roaring waves, thou art the choice of Fingal.

Now, like an hundred different winds that pour through many vales; divided, dark, the ſons of the hill advanced, and Cromla echoed around.

How can I relate the deaths when we cloſed in the ſtrife of our ſteel? O daughter of Toſcar! bloody were our hands! The gloomy ranks of Lochlin fell like the banks of the roaring Cona.—— Our arms were victorious on Lena; each chief fulfilled his promiſe. Beſide the murmur of Branno thou didſt often ſit, O maid; when thy white boſom roſe frequent, like the down of the ſwan when ſlow ſhe ſails the lake, and ſidelong winds are blowing. —— Thou haſt ſeen the ſun (9) retire red

(9) *Sol quoque & exoriens & cum ſe condit in undas*
Signa dabit. Solem certiſſima ſigna ſequuntur,
Ut quæ mane refert, & quæ ſurgentibus aſtris.
Ille ubi naſcentem maculis variaverit ortum
Conditus in nubem, medioque refugerit orbe;
Suſpecti tibi ſunt imbres. VIRG.

red and ſlow behind his cloud; night gathering round on the mountain, while the unfrequent blaſt (10) roared in narrow vales. At length the rain beats hard; and thunder rolls in peals. Lightning glances on the rocks. Spirits ride on beams of fire. And the ſtrength of the mountain-ſtreams (11) comes

Above the reſt the ſun, who never lies,
Foretels the change of weather in the ſkies.
For if he riſe, unwilling to his race,
Clouds on his brow and ſpots upon his face;
Or if thro' miſts he ſhoots his ſullen beams,
Frugal of light, in looſe and ſtraggling ſtreams,
Suſpect a drifling day. DRYDEN.

(10) *Continuo ventis ſurgentibus aut freta ponti*
Incipiunt agitata tumeſcere; & aridus altis
Montibus audiri fragor, aut reſonantia longe
Littora miſceri, & nemorum increbeſcere murmur.
VIRG.

For ere the riſing winds begin to roar,
The working ſeas advance to waſh the ſhore;
Soft whiſpers run along the leafy wood,
And mountains whiſtle to the murm'ring flood.
DRYDEN.

(11) —— *ruunt de montibus omnes.* VIRG.

The rapid rains, deſcending from the hills,
To rolling torrents ſwell the creeping rills.
DRYDEN.

mes roaring down the hills. Such was the noiſe of battle, maid of the arms of ſnow. Why, daughter of the hill, that tear? the maids of Lochlin have cauſe to weep. The people of their country fell, for bloody was the blue ſteel of the race of my heroes. But I am ſad, forlorn, and blind; and no more the companion of heroes. Give, lovely maid, to me thy tears, for I have ſeen the tombs of all my friends.

It was then by Fingal's hand a hero fell, to his grief —— Gray-haired he rolled in the duſt, and lifted his faint eyes to the king. And is it by me thou haſt fallen, ſaid the ſon of Comhal, thou friend of Agandecca! I ſaw thy tears for the maid of my love in the halls of the bloody Starno. Thou haſt been the foe of the foes of my love, and haſt thou fallen by my hand? Raiſe, Ullin, raiſe the grave of the ſon of Mathon; and give his name to the ſong of Agandecca; for dear to my ſoul haſt thou been, thou darkly-dwelling maid of Ardven.

Cuchullin, from the cave of Cromla, heard the noiſe of the troubled war. He called to Connal

chief of ſwords, and Carril of other times. The gray-haired heroes heard his voice, and took their aſpen ſpears. They came, and ſaw the tide of battle, like the crowded waves of the ocean; when the dark wind blows from the deep, and rolls the billows through the ſandy vale.

Cuchullin kindled at the ſight, and darkneſs gathered on his brow. His hand is on the ſword of his fathers: his red-rolling eyes on the foe. He thrice attempted to ruſh to battle, and thrice did Connal ſtop him. Chief of the iſle of miſt, he ſaid, Fingal ſubdues the foe. Seek not a part of the fame of the king; himſelf is like a ſtorm.

Then, Carril, go, replied the chief, and greet the king of Morven. When Lochlin falls away like a ſtream after rain, and the noiſe of the battle is over, then be thy voice ſweet in his ear to praiſe the king of ſwords. Give him the ſword of Caithbat; for Cuchullin is worthy no more to lift the arms of his fathers.

But, O ye ghoſts of the lonely Cromla! ye ſouls of chiefs that are no more! be ye the companions of

of Cuchullin, and talk to him in the cave of his ſorrow. For never more ſhall I be renowned among the mighty in the land. I am like a beam that has ſhone; like a miſt that fled away, when the blaſt of the morning came, and brightened the ſhaggy ſide of the hill. Connal, talk of arms no more: departed is my fame. --- My ſighs ſhall be on Cromla's wind, till my footſteps ceaſe to be ſeen. —— And thou, white-boſom'd Bragela, mourn over the fall of my fame; for, vanquiſhed, I will never return to thee, thou ſun-beam of Dunſcaich.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK V.

Cuchullin and Connal ſtill remain on the hill. Fingal and Swaran meet; the combat is deſcribed. Swaran is overcome, bound and delivered over as a priſoner to the care of Oſſian and Gaul the ſon of Morni; Fingal, his younger ſons, and Oſcar, ſtill purſue the enemy. The epiſode of Orla a chief of Lochlin, who was mortally wounded in the battle, is introduced. Fingal, touched with the death of Orla, orders the purſuit to be diſcontinued; and calling his ſons together, he is informed that Ryno, the youngeſt of them, was killed. He laments his death, hears the ſtory of Lamdarg and Gelchoſſa, and returns towards the place where he had left Swaran. Carril, who had been ſent by Cuchullin to congratulate Fingal on his victory, comes in the mean time to Oſſian. The converſation of the two poets cloſes the action of the fourth day.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK V. (1)

Now Connal, on Cromla's windy ſide, ſpoke to the chief of the noble car. Why that gloom, ſon of Semo? Our friends are the mighty in battle. And renowned art thou, O warrior! many

(1) The fourth day ſtill continues. The poet by putting the narration in the mouth of Connal, who ſtill remained with Cuchullin on the ſide of Cromla, gives propriety to the praiſes of Fingal. The beginning of this book, in the original, is one of the moſt beautiful parts of the poem. The verſification is regular and full, and agrees very well with the ſedate character of Connal. —— No poet has adapted the cadence of his verſe more

many were the deaths of thy ſteel. Often has Bragela met with blue-rolling eyes of joy, often has ſhe met her hero, returning in the midſt of the valiant; when his ſword was red with ſlaughter, and his foes ſilent in the fields of the tomb. Pleaſant to her ears were thy bards, when thine actions roſe in the ſong.

But behold the king of Morven; he moves below like a pillar of fire. His ſtrength is like the ſtream of Lubar, or the wind of the echoing Cromla; when the branchy foreſts of night are overturned.

Happy are thy people, O Fingal, thine arm ſhall fight their battles: thou art the firſt in their dangers; the wiſeſt in the days of their peace. Thou ſpeakeſt and thy thouſands obey; and armies tremble at the ſound of thy ſteel. Happy are thy people, Fingal, chief of the lonely hills.

Who

more to the temper of the ſpeaker, than Oſſian has done. It is more than probable that the whole poem was originally deſigned to be ſung to the harp, as the verſification is ſo various, and ſo much ſuited to the different paſſions of the human mind.

Who is that ſo dark and terrible, coming in the thunder of his courſe? who is it but Starno's ſon to meet the king of Morven? Behold the battle of the chiefs: it is like the ſtorm of the ocean, when two ſpirits meet far diſtant, and contend for the rolling of the wave. The hunter hears the noiſe on his hill; and ſees the high billows advancing to Ardven's ſhore.

Such were the words of Connal, when the heroes met in the midſt of their falling people. There was the clang of arms! there every blow, like the hundred hammers of the furnace! Terrible is the battle of the kings, and horrid the look of their eyes. Their dark-brown ſhields are cleft in twain; and their ſteel flies, broken, from their helmets. They fling their weapons down. Each ruſhes (2) to

(2) This paſſage reſembles one in the twenty-third Iliad.

Cloſe lock'd above their heads and arms are mixt;
Below their planted feet at diſtance fixt;
Now to the graſp each manly body bends;
The humid ſweat from ev'ry pore deſcends;
Their bones reſound with blows: ſides, ſhoulders, thighs,
Swell to each gripe, and bloody tumours riſe.

POPE.

to the graſp of his foe. Their ſinewy arms bend round each other: they turn from ſide to ſide and ſtrain and ſtretch their large ſpreading limbs below. But when the pride of their ſtrength aroſe, they ſhook the hill with their heels; rocks tumble from their places on high; the green-headed buſhes are overturned. At length the ſtrength of Swaran fell; and the king of the groves is bound.

Thus have I ſeen on Cona; (but Cona I behold no more) thus have I ſeen two dark hills removed from their place by the ſtrength of the burſting ſtream. They turn from ſide to ſide, and their tall oaks meet one another on high. Then they fall together with all their rocks and trees. The ſtreams are turned by their ſides, and the red ruin is ſeen afar.

Sons of the king of Morven, ſaid the noble Fingal, guard the king of Lochlin; for he is ſtrong as his thouſand waves. His hand is taught to the battle, and his race of the times of old. Gaul, thou firſt of my heroes, and Oſſian king of ſongs, attend the friend of Agandecca, and raiſe to joy his grief. —— But, Oſcar, Fillan, and Ryno, ye

ye children of the race! purſue the reſt of Lochlin over the heath of Lena; that no veſſel may hereafter bound on the dark-rolling waves of Iniſtore.

They flew like lightning over the heath. He ſlowly moved as a cloud of thunder when the ſultry plain of ſummer is ſilent. His ſword is before him as a ſun-beam, terrible as the ſtreaming meteor of night. He came toward a chief of Lochlin, and ſpoke to the ſon of the wave.

Who is that like a cloud at the rock of the roaring ſtream? He cannot bound over its courſe; yet ſtately is the chief! his boſſy ſhield is on his ſide; and his ſpear like the tree of the deſart. Youth of the dark-brown hair, art thou of Fingal's foes?

I am a ſon of Lochlin, he cries, and ſtrong is my arm in war. My ſpouſe is weeping at home, but Orla (3) will never return.

Or

(3) The ſtory of Orla is ſo beautiful and affecting in the original, that many are in poſſeſſion of it in the north of Scotland, who never heard a ſyllable more of the poem. It varies the action, and

Or fights or yields the hero, ſaid Fingal of the noble deeds? foes do not conquer in my preſence: but my friends are renowned in the hall. Son of the wave, follow me, partake the feaſt of my ſhells, and purſue the deer of my deſart.

No: ſaid the hero, I aſſiſt the feeble: my ſtrength ſhall remain with the weak in arms. My ſword has been always unmatched, O warrior: let the king of Morven yield.

I never yielded, Orla, Fingal never yielded to man. Draw thy ſword and chuſe thy foe. Many are my heroes-

And does the king refuſe the combat, ſaid Orla of the dark-brown hair? Fingal is a match for Orla: and he alone of all his race. —— But, king of Morven, if I ſhall fall; (as one time the warrior muſt die;) raiſe my tomb in the midſt, and let it be the greateſt on Lena. And ſend, over the dark-blue wave, the ſword of Orla to the ſpouſe of his love; that ſhe may ſhew it to her ſon, with tears, to kindle his ſoul to war. Son

and awakes the attention of the reader when he expected nothing but languor in the conduct of the poem, as the great action was over in the conqueſt of Swaran.

Son of the mournful tale, ſaid Fingal, why doſt thou awaken my tears? One day the warriors muſt die, and the children ſee their uſeleſs arms in the hall. But, Orla, thy tomb ſhall riſe, and thy white-boſomed ſpouſe weep over thy ſword.

They fought on the heath of Lena, but feeble was the arm of Orla. The ſword of Fingal deſcended, and cleft his ſhield in twain. It fell and glittered on the ground, as the moon on the ſtream of night.

King of Morven, ſaid the hero, lift thy ſword, and pierce my breaſt. Wounded and faint from battle my friends have left me here. The mournful tale ſhall come to my love on the banks of the ſtreamy Loda; when ſhe is alone in the wood; and the ruſtling blaſt in the leaves,

No; ſaid the king of Morven, I will never wound thee, Orla. On the banks of Loda let her ſee thee eſcaped from the hands of war. Let thy gray-haired father, who, perhaps, is blind with age, hear the ſound of thy voice in his hall. ——— With joy let the hero riſe, and ſearch for his ſon with his hands.

But

But never will he find him, Fingal; ſaid the youth of the ſtreamy Loda. —— On Lena's heath I ſhall die; and foreign bards will talk of me. My broad belt covers my wound of death. And now I give it to the wind.

The dark blood poured from his ſide, he fell pale on the heath of Lena. Fingal bends over him as he dies, and calls his younger heroes.

Oſcar and Fillan, my ſons, raiſe high the memory of Orla. Here let the dark-haired hero reſt far from the ſpouſe of his love. Here let him reſt in his narrow houſe far from the ſound of Loda. The ſons of the feeble will find his bow at home, but will not be able to bend it. His faithful dogs howl on his hills, and his boars, which he uſed to purſue, rejoice. Fallen is the arm of battle; the mighty among the valiant is low!

Exalt the voice, and blow the horn, ye ſons of the king of Morven: let us go back to Swaran, and ſend the night away on ſong. Fillan, Oſcar, and Ryno, fly over the heath of Lena. Where, Ryno, art thou, young ſon of fame? Thou art not wont to be the laſt to anſwer thy father.

Ryno,

Ryno, ſaid Ullin firſt of bards, is with the awful forms of his fathers. With Trathal king of ſhields, and Trenmor of the mighty deeds. The youth is low, - - - the youth is pale, - - - he lies on Lena's heath.

And fell the ſwifteſt in the race, ſaid the king, the firſt to bend the bow? Thou ſcarce haſt been known to me: why did young Ryno fall? But ſleep thou ſoftly on Lena, Fingal ſhall ſoon behold thee. Soon ſhall my voice be heard no more, and my footſteps ceaſe to be ſeen. The bards will tell of Fingal's name; the ſtones will talk of me. But, Ryno, thou art low indeed, —— thou haſt not received thy fame. Ullin, ſtrike the harp for Ryno; tell what the chief would have been. Farewel, thou firſt in every field. No more ſhall I direct thy dart. Thou that haſt been ſo fair; I behold thee not - - - Farewel.

The tear is on the cheek of the king; for terrible was his ſon in war. His ſon! that was like a beam of fire by night on the hill; when the foreſts ſink down in its courſe, and the traveller trembles at the ſound.

Whoſe fame is in that dark-green tomb, begun the king of generous ſhells? four ſtones with their heads of moſs ſtand there; and mark the narrow houſe of death. Near it let my Ryno reſt, and be the neighbour of the valiant. Perhaps ſome chief of fame is here to fly with my ſon on clouds. O Ullin, raiſe the ſongs of other times. Bring to memory the dark dwellers of the tomb. If in the field of the valiant they never fled from danger, my ſon ſhall reſt with them, far from his friends, on the heath of Lena.

Here, ſaid the mouth of the ſong, here reſt the firſt of heroes. Silent is Lamderg (4) in this tomb, and Ullin king of ſwords. And who, ſoft ſmiling from her cloud, ſhews me her face of love? Why, daughter, why ſo pale art thou, firſt of the maids of Cromla? Doſt thou ſleep with the foes in battle, Gelchoſſa, white-boſomed daughter of Tuathal? —— Thou haſt been the love of thouſands, but Lamderg was thy love. He came to Selma's moſſy towers, and, ſtriking his dark buckler, ſpoke: Where

(4) Lamh-dhearg ſignifies *bloody hand.* Gelchoſſa, *white legged.* Tuathal, *ſurly.* Ulſadda, *long-beard.* Ferchios, *the conqueror of men.*

Where is Gelchoſſa, my love, the daughter of the noble Tuathal? I left her in the hall of Selma, when I fought with the gloomy Ulradda. Return ſoon, O Lamderg, ſhe ſaid, for here I am in the midſt of ſorrow. Her white breaſt roſe with ſighs. Her cheek was wet with tears. But I ſee her not coming to meet me; and to ſooth my ſoul after battle. Silent is the hall of my joy; I hear not the voice of the bard. --- Bran (5) does not ſhake his chains at the gate, glad at the coming of Lamderg. Where is Gelchoſſa, my love, the mild daughter of the generous Tuathal?

Lamderg! ſays Ferchios the ſon of Aidon, Gelchoſſa may be on Cromla; ſhe and the maids of the bow purſuing the flying deer.

Ferchios! replied the chief of Cromla, no noiſe meets the ear of Lamderg. No ſound is in the woods of Lena. No deer fly in my ſight. No panting dog purſues. I ſee not Gelchoſſa my love, fair as

(4) Bran is a common name of gray-hounds to this day. It is a cuſtom in the north of Scotland, to give the names of the heroes mentioned in this poem, to their dogs; a proof that they are familiar to the ear, and their fame generally known.

as the full moon ſetting on the hills of Cromla. Go, Ferchios, go to Allad (5) the gray-haired ſon of the rock. His dwelling is in the circle of ſtones. He may know of Gelchoſſa.

The ſon of Aidon went; and ſpoke to the ear of age. Allad! thou that dwelleſt in the rock, thou that trembleſt alone, what ſaw thine eyes of age?

I ſaw, anſwered Allad the old, Ullin the ſon of Cairbar. He came like a cloud from Cromla; and he hummed a ſurly ſong like a blaſt in a leafleſs wood. He entered the hall of Selma. —— Lamderg, he ſaid, moſt dreadful of men, fight or yield to Ullin. Lamderg, replied Gelchoſſa, the ſon of battle, is not here. He fights Ulfadda mighty chief. He is not here, thou firſt of men. But Lamderg never yielded. He will fight the ſon of Cairbar.

Lovely

(5) Allad is plainly a druid: he is called the ſon of the rock, from his dwelling in a cave; and the circle of ſtones here mentioned is the pale of the druidical temple. He is here conſulted as one who had a ſupernatural knowledge of things; from the druids, no doubt, came the ridiculous notion of the ſecond ſight, which prevailed in the highlands and iſles.

Lovely art thou, ſaid terrible Ullin, daughter of the generous Tuathal. I carry thee to Cairbar's halls. Three days I remain on Cromla, to wait that ſon of battle, Lamderg. On the fourth Gelchoſſa is mine, if the mighty Lamderg flies.

Allad! ſaid the chief of Cromla, peace to thy dreams in the cave. Ferchios, ſound the horn of Lamderg that Ullin may hear on Cromla. Lamderg (6), like a roaring ſtorm, aſcended the hill from Selma. He hummed a ſurly ſong as he went, like the noiſe of a falling ſtream. He ſtood like a cloud on the hill, that varies its form to the wind. He rolled a ſtone, the ſign of war. Ullin heard in Cairbar's hall. The hero heard, with joy, his foe, and took his father's ſpear. A ſmile brightens his dark-brown cheek, as he places his ſword by his ſide. The dagger glittered in his hand. He whiſtled as he went.

Gelchoſſa ſaw the ſilent chief, as a wreath of miſt aſcending the hill. —— She ſtruck her white

(6) The reader will find this paſſage altered from what it was in the fragments of ancient poetry. —— It is delivered down very differently by tradition, and the tranſlator has choſen that reading which favours leaſt of bombaſt.

and heaving breaſt; and ſilent, tearful, feared for Lamderg.

Cairbar, hoary chief of ſhells, ſaid the maid of the tender hand; I muſt bend the bow on Cromla; for I ſee the dark-brown hinds.

She haſted up the hill. In vain! the gloomy heroes fought. —— Why ſhould I tell the king of Morven how wrathful heroes fight! —— Fierce Ullin fell. Young Lamderg came all pale to the daughter of generous Tuathal.

What blood, my love, the ſoft-haired woman ſaid, what blood runs down my warrior's ſide? — It is Ullin's blood, the chief replied, thou fairer than the ſnow of Cromla! Gelchoſſa, let me reſt here a little while. The mighty Lamderg died.

And ſleepeſt thou ſo ſoon on earth, O chief of ſhady Cromla? three days ſhe mourned beſide her love. —— The hunters found her dead. They raiſed this tomb above the three. Thy ſon, O king of Morven, may reſt here with heroes.

And here my ſon ſhall reſt, ſaid Fingal, the noiſe of their fame has reached my ears. Fillan and Fergus! bring hither Orla; the pale youth of the ſtream

ſtream of Loda. Not unequalled ſhall Ryno lie in earth when Orla is by his ſide. Weep, ye daughters of Morven; and ye maids of the ſtreamy Loda. Like a tree they grew on the hills; and they have fallen like the oak (7) of the deſart; when it lies acroſs a ſtream, and withers in the wind of the mountain.

Oſcar! chief of every youth! thou ſeeſt how they have fallen. Be thou, like them, on earth renowned. Like them the ſong of bards. Terrible were their forms in battle; but calm was Ryno in the days of peace. He was like the bow of the ſhower ſeen far diſtant on the ſtream; when the ſun is ſetting on Mora, and ſilence on the hill of deer. Reſt, youngeſt of my ſons, reſt, O Ryno, on Lena. We too ſhall be no more; for the warrior one day muſt fall.

Such was thy grief, thou king of hills, when Ryno lay on earth. What muſt the grief of Oſſian be,

(7) — ὡ ὅτε τις δρῦς ἠριπεν — HOM. Il. 16.

——— as the mountain oak
Nods to the ax, till with a groaning ſound
It ſinks, and ſpreads its honours on the ground.
POPE.

be, for thou thyſelf art gone. I hear not thy diſtant voice on Cona. My eyes perceive thee not. Often forlorn and dark I ſit at thy tomb; and feel it with my hands. When I think I hear thy voice; it is but the blaſt of the deſart. —— Fingal has long ſince fallen aſleep, the ruler of the war.

Then Gaul and Oſſian ſat with Swaran on the ſoft green banks of Lubar. I touched the harp to pleaſe the king. But gloomy was his brow. He rolled his red eyes towards Lena. The hero mourned his people.

I lifted my eyes to Cromla, and I ſaw the ſon of generous Semo. —— Sad and ſlow he retired from his hill towards the lonely cave of Tura. He ſaw Fingal victorious, and mixed his joy with grief. The ſun is bright on his armour, and Connal ſlowly followed. They ſunk behind the hill like two pillars of the fire of night: when winds purſue them over the mountain, and the flaming heath reſounds. Beſide a ſtream of roaring foam his cave is in a rock. One tree bends above it; and the ruſhing winds echo againſt its ſides. Here reſts the chief of Dunſcaich, the ſon of generous Semo. His thoughts are

are on the battle he loſt; and the tear is on his cheek. He mourned the departure of his fame that fled like the miſt of Cona. O Bragela, thou art too far remote to cheer the ſoul of the hero. But let him ſee thy bright form in his ſoul; that his thoughts may return to the lonely ſun-beam of Dunſcaich.

Who comes with the locks of age? It is the ſon of ſongs. Hail, Carril of other times, thy voice is like the harp in the halls of Tura. Thy words are pleaſant as the ſhower that falls on the fields of the ſun. Carril of the times of old, why comeſt thou from the ſon of the generous Semo?

Oſſian king of ſwords, replied the bard, thou beſt raiſeſt the ſong. Long haſt thou been known to Carril, thou ruler of battles. Often have I touched the harp to lovely Evirallin. Thou too haſt often accompanied my voice in Branno's hall of generous ſhells. And often, amidſt our voices, was heard the mildeſt Evirallin. One day ſhe ſung of Cormac's fall, the youth that died for her love. I ſaw the tears on her cheek, and on thine, thou chief of men. Her ſoul was touched for the unhappy, though ſhe loved him not. How fair

among a thouſand maids was the daughter of the generous Branno!

Bring not, Carril, I replied, bring not her memory to my mind. My ſoul muſt melt at the remembrance. My eyes muſt have their tears. Pale in the earth is ſhe the ſoftly-bluſhing fair of my love. But ſit thou on the heath, O Bard, and let us hear thy voice. It is pleaſant as the gale of ſpring that ſighs on the hunter's ear; when he wakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the muſic of the ſpirits of the hill.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT to Book VI.

Night comes on. Fingal gives a feaſt to his army, at which Swaran is preſent. The king commands Ullin his bard to give the ſong of peace; *a cuſtom always obſerved at the end of a war. Ullin relates the actions of Trenmor, great grandfather to Fingal, in Scandinavia, and his marriage with Inibaca, the daughter of a king of Lochlin who was anceſtor to Swaran; which conſideration, together with his being brother to Agandeccu, with whom Fingal was in love in his youth, induced the king to releaſe him, and permit him to return, with the remains of his army, into Lochlin, upon his promiſe of never returning to Ireland, in a hoſtile manner. The night is ſpent in ſettling Swaran's departure, in ſongs of bards, and in a converſation in which the ſtory of Grumal is introduced by Fingal. Morning comes. Swaran departs; Fingal goes on a hunting party, and finding Cuchullin in the cave of Tura, comforts him, and ſets ſail, the next day, for Scotland; which concludes the poem.*

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK VI. (1)

The clouds of night come rolling down and reſt on Cromla's dark-brown ſteep. The ſtars of the north ariſe over the rolling of the waves of Ullin; they ſhew their heads of fire through the flying miſt of heaven. A diſtant wind roars in the wood; but ſilent and dark is the plain of death.

Still on the darkening Lena aroſe in my ears the tuneful voice of Carril. He ſung of the companions of

(1) This book opens with the fourth night, and ends on the morning of the ſixth day. The time of five days, five nights, and a part of the ſixth day is taken up in the poem. The ſcene lies in the heath of Lena, and the mountain Cromla on the coaſt of Ulſter.

of our youth, and the days of former years; when we met on the banks of Lego, and ſent round the joy of the ſhell. Cromla, with its cloudy ſteeps, anſwered to his voice. The ghoſts of thoſe he ſung came in their ruſtling blaſts. They were ſeen to bend with joy towards the ſound of their praiſe.

Be thy ſoul bleſt, O Carril, in the midſt of thy eddying winds. O that thou would come to my hall when I am alone by night! --- And thou doſt come, my friend, I hear often thy light hand on my harp; when it hangs on the diſtant wall, and the feeble ſound touches my ear. Why doſt thou not ſpeak to me in my grief, and tell when I ſhall behold my friends? But thou paſſeſt away in thy murmuring blaſt; and thy wind whiſtles through the gray hair of Oſſian.

Now on the ſide of Mora the heroes gathered to the feaſt. A thouſand aged oaks are burning to the wind. —— The ſtrength (2) of the ſhells goes round. And

(2) By the ſtrength of the ſhell is meant the liquor the heroes drunk: of what kind it was, cannot be aſcertained at this diſtance of time. The tranſlator has met with ſeveral ancient poems that mention wax-lights and wine as common in the halls of Fingal. The names of both are borrowed from the

And the ſouls of warriors brighten with joy. But the king of Lochlin is ſilent, and ſorrow reddens in the eyes of his pride. He often turned toward Lena and remembered that he fell.

Fingal leaned on the ſhield of his fathers. His gray locks ſlowly waved on the wind, and glittered to the beam of night. He ſaw the grief of Swaran, and ſpoke to the firſt of Bards.

Raiſe, Ullin, raiſe the ſong of peace, and ſooth my ſoul after battle, that my ear may forget the noiſe of arms. And let a hundred harps be near to gladden the king of Lochlin. He muſt depart from us with joy. —— None ever went ſad from Fingal. Oſcar! the lightning of my ſword is againſt the ſtrong in battle; but peaceful it lies by my ſide when warriors yield in war.

Tren-

Latin, which plainly ſhews that our anceſtors had them from the Romans, if they had them at all. The Caledonians in their frequent incurſions to the province, might become acquainted with thoſe conveniencies of life, and introduce them into their own country, among the booty which they carried from South Britain.

Trenmor (3), ſaid the mouth of the ſongs, lived in the days of other years. He bounded over the waves of the north: companion of the ſtorm. The high rocks of the land of Lochlin, and its groves of murmuring ſounds appeared to the hero through the miſt; - - - he bound his white-boſomed ſails. —— Trenmor purſued the boar that roared along the woods of Gormal. Many had fled from its preſence; but the ſpear of Trenmor ſlew it.

Three chiefs, that beheld the deed, told of the mighty ſtranger. They told that he ſtood like a pillar of fire in the bright arms of his valour. The king of Lochlin prepared the feaſt, and called the blooming Trenmor. Three days he feaſted at Gormal's windy towers; and got his choice in the combat.

The land of Lochlin had no hero that yielded not to Trenmor. The ſhell of joy went round with ſongs in praiſe of the king of Morven; he that came over the waves, the firſt of mighty men.

Now when the fourth gray morn aroſe, the hero launched his ſhip; and walking along the ſilent ſhore

(3) Trenmor was great grandfather to Fingal. The ſtory is introduced to facilitate the diſmiſſion of Swaran.

ſhore waited for the ruſhing wind. For loud and diſtant he heard the blaſt murmuring in the grove.

Covered over with arms of ſteel a ſon of the woody Gormal appeared. Red was his cheek and fair his hair. His ſkin like the ſnow of Morven. Mild rolled his blue and ſmiling eye when he ſpoke to the king of ſwords.

Stay, Trenmor, ſtay thou firſt of men, thou haſt not conquered Lonval's ſon. My ſword has often met the brave. And the wiſe ſhun the ſtrength of my bow.

Thou fair-haired youth, Trenmor replied, I will not fight with Lonval's ſon. Thine arm is feeble, ſun-beam of beauty. Retire to Gormal's dark-brown hinds.

But I will retire, replied the youth, with the ſword of Trenmor; and exult in the ſound of my fame. The virgins ſhall gather with ſmiles around him who conquered Trenmor. They ſhall ſigh with the ſighs of love, and admire the length of thy ſpear; when I ſhall carry it among thouſands, and lift the glittering point to the ſun.

Thou ſhalt never carry my ſpear, ſaid the angry king of Morven. —— Thy mother ſhall find thee pale on the ſhore of the echoing Gormal; and, looking over the dark-blue deep, ſee the ſails of him that ſlew her ſon.

I will not lift the ſpear, replied the youth, my arm is not ſtrong with years. But with the feathered dart I have learned to pierce a diſtant foe. Throw down that heavy mail of ſteel; for Trenmor is covered all over. —— I firſt will lay my mail on earth. —— Throw now thy dart, thou king of Morven.

He ſaw the heaving of her breaſt. It was the ſiſter of the king. - - - She had ſeen him in the halls of Gormal; and loved his face of youth. —— The ſpear dropt from the hand of Trenmor: he bent his red cheek to the ground, for he had ſeen her like a beam of light that meets the ſons of the cave, when they reviſit the fields of the ſun, and bend their aching eyes.

Chief of the windy Morven, begun the maid of the arms of ſnow; let me reſt in thy bounding ſhip, far from the love of Corlo. For he, like

like the thunder of the deſart, is terrible to Inibaca. He loves me in the gloom of his pride, and ſhakes ten thouſand ſpears.

Reſt thou in peace, ſaid the mighty Trenmor, behind the ſhield of my fathers. I will not fly from the chief, though he ſhakes ten thouſand ſpears.

Three days he waited on the ſhore; and ſent his horn abroad. He called Corlo to battle from all his echoing hills. But Corlo came not to battle. The king of Lochlin deſcended. He feaſted on the roaring ſhore; and gave the maid to Trenmor.

King of Lochlin, ſaid Fingal, thy blood flows in the veins of thy foe. Our families met in battle, becauſe they loved the ſtrife of ſpears. But often did they feaſt in the hall; and ſend round the joy of the ſhell. —— Let thy face brighten with gladneſs, and thine ear delight in the harp. Dreadful as the ſtorm of thine ocean thou haſt poured thy valour forth; thy voice has been like the voice of thouſands when they engage in battle. Raiſe, tomorrow, thy white ſails to the wind, thou brother of Agandecca. Bright as the beam of noon

ſhe comes on my mournful ſoul. I ſaw thy tears for the fair one, and ſpared thee in the halls of Starno; when my ſword was red with ſlaughter, and my eye full of tears for the maid. —— Or doſt thou chuſe the fight? The combat which thy fathers gave to Trenmor is thine: that thou mayeſt depart renowned like the ſun ſetting in the weſt.

King of the race of Morven, ſaid the chief of the waves of Lochlin; never will Swaran fight thee, firſt of a thouſand heroes! I ſaw thee in the halls of Starno, and few were thy years beyond my own. — When ſhall I, ſaid I to my ſoul, lift the ſpear like the noble Fingal? We have fought heretofore, O warrior, on the ſide of the ſhaggy Malmor; after my waves had carried me to thy halls, and the feaſt of a thouſand ſhells was ſpread. Let the bards ſend him who overcame to future years, for noble was the ſtrife of heathy Malmor.

But many of the ſhips of Lochlin have loſt their youths on Lena. Take theſe, thou king of Morven, and be the friend of Swaran. And when thy ſons ſhall come to the moſſy towers of Gormal, the feaſt of ſhells ſhall be ſpread, and the combat offered on the vale.

Nor

Nor ſhip, replied the king, ſhall Fingal take, nor land of many hills. The deſart is enough to me with all its deer and woods. Riſe on thy waves again, thou noble friend of Agandecca. Spread thy white ſails to the beam of the morning, and return to the echoing hills of Gormal.

Bleſt be thy ſoul, thou king of ſhells, ſaid Swaran of the dark-brown ſhield. In peace thou art the gale of ſpring. In war the mountain-ſtorm. Take now my hand in friendſhip, thou noble king of Morven. Let thy bards mourn thoſe who fell. Let Erin give the ſons of Lochlin to earth; and raiſe the moſſy ſtones of their fame. That the children of the north hereafter may behold the place where their fathers fought. And ſome hunter may ſay, when he leans on a moſſy tomb, here Fingal and Swaran fought, the heroes of other years. Thus hereafter ſhall he ſay, and our fame ſhall laſt for ever.

Swaran, ſaid the king of the hills, to-day our fame is greateſt. We ſhall paſs away like a dream. No ſound will be in the fields of our battles. Our tombs will be loſt in the heath. The hunter ſhall

not know the place of our reſt. Our names may be heard in ſong, but the ſtrength of our arms will ceaſe. O Oſſian, Carril, and Ullin, you know of heroes that are no more. Give us the ſong of other years. Let the night paſs away on the ſound, and morning return with joy.

We gave the ſong to the kings, and a hundred harps accompanied our voice. The face of Swaran brightened like the full moon of heaven, when the clouds vaniſh away, and leave her calm and broad in the midſt of the ſky.

It was then that Fingal ſpoke to Carril the chief of other times. Where is the ſon of Semo; the king of the iſle of miſt? has he retired, like the meteor of death, to the dreary cave of Tura?

Cuchullin, ſaid Carril of other times, lies in the dreary cave of Tura. His hand is on the ſword of his ſtrength. His thoughts on the battle which he loſt. Mournful is the king of ſpears; for he has often been victorious. He ſends the ſword of his war to reſt on the ſide of Fingal. For, like the ſtorm of the deſart, thou haſt ſcattered all his foes. Take, O Fingal, the ſword of the hero, for

for his fame is departed like miſt when it flies before the ruſtling wind of the vale.

No: replied the king, Fingal ſhall never take his ſword. His arm is mighty in war; and tell him his fame ſhall never fail. Many have been overcome in battle, that have ſhone afterwards like the ſun of heaven.

O Swaran, king of the reſounding woods, give all thy grief away. —— The vanquiſhed, if brave, are renowned; they are like the ſun in a cloud when he hides his face in the ſouth, but looks again on the hills of graſs.

Grumal was a chief of Cona. He ſought the battle on every coaſt. His ſoul rejoiced in blood; his ear in the din of arms. He poured his warriors on the ſounding Craca; and Craca's king met him from his grove; for then within the circle of Brumo (*) he ſpoke to the ſtone of power.

Fierce

(*) This paſſage alludes to the religion of the king of Craca. See a note on a ſimilar ſubject in the third book.

Fierce was the battle of the heroes, for the maid of the breaſt of ſnow. The fame of the daughter of Craca had reached Grumal at the ſtreams of Cona; he vowed to have the white-boſomed maid, or die on the echoing Craca. Three days they ſtrove together, and Grumal on the fourth was bound.

Far from his friends they placed him in the horrid circle of Brumo; where often, they ſaid, the ghoſts of the dead howled round the ſtone of their fear. But afterwards he ſhone like a pillar of the light of heaven. They fell by his mighty hand, and Grumal had his fame.

Raiſe, ye bards of other times, raiſe high the praiſe of heroes; that my ſoul may ſettle on their fame; and the mind of Swaran ceaſe to be ſad.

They lay in the heath of Mora; the dark winds ruſtled over the heroes. —— A hundred voices at once aroſe, a hundred harps were ſtruug; they ſung of other times, and the mighty chiefs of former years.

When now ſhall I hear the bard; or rejoice at the fame of my fathers? The harp is not ſtrung on

on Morven; nor the voice of muſic raiſed on Cona. Dead with the mighty is the bard; and fame is in the deſart no more.

Morning trembles with the beam of the eaſt, and glimmers on gray-headed Comla. Over Lena is heard the horn of Swaran, and the ſons of the ocean gather around. —— Silent and ſad they mount the wave, and the blaſt of Ullin is behind their ſails. White, as the miſt of Morven, they float along the ſea.

Call, ſaid Fingal, call my dogs, the long-bounding ſons of the chace. Call white-breaſted Bran; and the ſurly ſtrength of Luath. —— Fillan, and Ryno - - - but he is not here; my ſon reſts on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus, blow my horn, that the joy of the chace may ariſe; that the deer of Cromla may hear and ſtart at the lake of roes.

The ſhrill ſound ſpreads along the wood. The ſons of heathy Cromla ariſe. —— A thouſand dogs fly off at once, gray-bounding through the heath. A deer fell by every dog, and three by the white-

breaſted Bran. He brought them, in their flight, to Fingal, that the joy of the king might be great.

One deer fell at the tomb of Ryno; and the grief of Fingal returned. He ſaw how peaceful lay the ſtone of him who was the firſt at the chace. —— No more ſhalt thou riſe, O my ſon, to partake of the feaſt of Cromla. Soon will thy tomb be hid, and the graſs grow rank on thy grave. The ſons of the feeble ſhall paſs over it, and not know that the mighty lie there.

Oſſian and Fillan, ſons of my ſtrength, and Gaul king of the blue ſwords of war, let us aſcend the hill to the cave of Tura, and find the chief of the battles of Erin. —— Are theſe the walls of Tura? gray and lonely they riſe on the heath. The king of ſhells is ſad, and the halls are deſolate. Come let us find the king of ſwords, and give him all our joy. —— But is that Cuchullin, O Fillan, or a pillar of ſmoke on the heath? The wind of Cromla is on my eyes, and I diſtinguiſh not my friend.

Fingal! replied the youth, it is the ſon of Semo. Gloomy and ſad is the hero; his hand is on his

his ſword. Hail to the ſon of battle, breaker of the ſhields!

Hail to thee, replied Cuchullin, hail to all the ſons of Morven. Delightful is thy preſence, O Fingal, it is like the ſun on Cromla; when the hunter mourns his abſence for a ſeaſon, and ſees him between the clouds. Thy ſons are like ſtars that attend thy courſe, and give light in the night. It is not thus thou haſt ſeen me, O Fingal, returning from the wars of the deſart; when the kings of the world (*) had fled, and joy returned to the hill of hinds.

Many are thy words, Cuchullin, ſaid Connan (†) of ſmall renown. Thy words are many, ſon of

(*) This is the only paſſage in the poem, wherein the wars of Fingal againſt the Romans are alluded to: ——— The Roman emperor is diſtinguiſhed in old compoſitions by the title of *king of the world.*

(†) Connan was of the family of Morni. He is mentioned in ſeveral other poems, and always appears with the ſame character. The poet paſſed him over in ſilence till now, and his behaviour here deſerves no better uſage.

of Semo, but where are thy deeds in arms? Why did we come over the ocean to aid thy feeble ſword? Thou flyeſt to thy cave of ſorrow, and Connan fights thy battles: Reſign to me theſe arms of light; yield them, thou ſon of Erin.

No hero, replied the chief, ever ſought the arms of Cuchullin; and had a thouſand heroes fought them it were in vain, thou gloomy youth. I fled not to the cave of ſorrow, as long as Erin's warriors lived.

Youth of the feeble arm, ſaid Fingal, Connan ſay no more. Cuchullin is renowned in battle, and terrible over the deſart. Often have I heard thy fame, thou ſtormy chief of Innis-fail. Spread now thy white ſails for the iſle of miſt, and ſee Bragela leaning on her rock. Her tender eye is in tears, and the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breaſt. She liſtens to the winds of night to hear the voice of thy rowers (*); to hear the ſong of the ſea, and the ſound of thy diſtant harp.

And

(*) The practice of ſinging when they row is univerſal among the inhabitans of the north-weſt coaſt of Scotland and the iſles. It deceives time, and inſpirits the rowers.

And long ſhall ſhe liſten in vain; Cuchullin ſhall never return. How can I behold Bragela to raiſe the ſigh of her breaſt? Fingal, I was always victorious in the battles of other ſpears!

And hereafter thou ſhalt be victorious, ſaid Fingal king of ſhells. The fame of Cuchullin ſhall grow like the branchy tree of Cromla. Many battles await thee, O chief, and many ſhall be the wounds of thy hand. Bring hither, Oſcar, the deer, and prepare the feaſt of ſhells? that our ſouls may rejoice after danger, and our friends delight in our preſence.

We ſat, we feaſted, and we ſung. The ſoul of Cuchullin roſe. The ſtrength of his arm returned; and gladneſs brightened on his face. Ullin gave the ſong, and Carril raiſed the voice. I, often, joined the bards, and ſung of battles of the ſpear, —— Battles! where I often fought; but now I fight no more. The fame of my former actions is ceaſed; and I ſit forlorn at the tombs of my friends.

Thus they paſſed the night in the ſong; and brought back the morning with joy. Fingal aroſe

on

on the heath, and ſhook his glittering ſpear in his hand. —— He moved firſt toward the plains of Lena, and we followed like a ridge of fire. Spread the ſail, ſaid the king of Morven, and catch the winds that pour from Lena. —— We roſe on the wave with ſongs, and ruſhed, with joy, through the foam of the ocean (*).

(*) It is allowed by the beſt critics that an epic poem ought to end happily. This rule, in its moſt material circumſtances, is obſerved by the three moſt deſervedly celebrated poets, Homer, Virgil, and Milton; yet, I know not how it happens, the concluſions of their poems throw a melancholy damp on the mind. One leaves his reader at a funeral; another at the untimely death of a hero; and the third in the ſolitary ſcenes of an unpeopled world.

Ὡς οἳ γ' ἀμφίεπον ταφον Ἕκτορος ἱπποδαμοιο.

Homer.

Such honours Ilion to her hero paid,
And peaceful ſlept the mighty Hector's ſhade.

Pope.

——— *Ferrum adverſo ſub pectore condit*
Fervidus. Aſt illi ſolvuntur frigore membra,
Vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata ſub umbras.

Virgil.

He

He rais'd his arm aloft; and at the word
Deep in his boſom drove the ſhining ſword.
The ſtreaming blood diſtain'd his arms around,
And the diſdainful ſoul came ruſhing thro' the wound.

DRYDEN.

They, hand in hand, with wand'ring ſteps and ſlow,
Through Eden took their ſolitary way.

MILTON.